

SERMONS

Ex Libris Joannis UPON *Afflictio propter peccata*

The Twelfth Chapter of the Epistle of
PAUL the Apostle, to the

HEBREVS;

WHEREIN

Many Heads of Divinity and Important Cases of
Conscience, especially such as concern Christians in an
afflicted Condition, are succinctly and satisfyingly
Handled :

Being the Substance of what was Preached at *Edinburgh*
upon that whole Chapter :

By the late Reverend Mr. *GEORGE ANDREWS* Minister
of the Gospel there.

Now Published since his Death from his Notes at the Desire of
his Hearers.

EDINBURGH,

Printed by the Heirs and Successors of *Andrew Anderson*, Printer
to the Queens most Excellent Majesty, Anno DOM. 1711.

SEYMOUR

The 2nd and 3rd Chapters of the Treaty of
- 1794 - the 1st of the 1794 -

HERBERT

W I B A I W

43

47



his efforts

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
540 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

To the Right Honourable,

ADAM BROWN *Lord Provost,*

WILLIAM HUTCHISON,

ARCHIBALD COCKBURN,

JOHN HAY,

THOMAS DUNDAS;

Baillies.

JOHN DUNCAN *Dean of Guild,*

WILLIAM DUNDAS *Treasurer,*

*And Remanent Members of the Council of
Edinburgh.*

Right Honourable,



Nothing could have prevail'd with me to appear
in Print, but a grateful Respect that I owed
to the Memory of my deceased Colleague, and
the favourable Construction, that I could
not to meet with at the Hands of You my
Honourable Patrons : To whom could these Sermons
flie for Countenance and Acceptance, but unto You, being
preached

preached in a Church of Your own Erection. For my Part, I cannot say that I understood from the Reverend Mr. Andrews, that he designed these his Sermons should have been Printed, (and so all who read the same must not impute to him any Defects may be found in Order or Expression) but his Friends, being fully ascertained how Acceptable they were to his Audience, where he delivered them, and so being assured both by them that heard them, and others in this City, that the Publishing of them might contribute to the Benefit of many, have adventured to commit them to publick View : Sure had he liv'd himself to have given them that polite Dress he was capable to have done, no doubt he could have formed them to undergo the Censure of this critical Age; but what the Curious may find Fault with, may be very Acceptable to the Pious and Sober : As I am perswaded that not a few were refresh'd when they were delivered, so that many more may be Edified and Comforted by them now Published, and especially you my Honourable Patrons, is the hearty and sincere Wish of,

Right Honourable,

Your most Humble and most obliged Servant,

RO. SANDILANDS.

[]

TO THE
READER.

Christian Reader,

WHile the World is troubled about many Things, and have itching Ears after Novelties that cannot Profit, it should be our Concern to mind the one Thing needful, to secure the better Part that cannot be taken from us, that whatever Storms blow, we may be prepared for them, and secure from Danger by them, having fled to Christ for Refuge, endeavouring, through Grace, to make use of his Fulness, to imitate his Example, and follow the Footsteps of his Flock, that through Faith and Patience we may inherit the Promises. To attain this great End, these following Sermons may, through the Blessing of GOD, be useful: The Author of them was born in the Year 1666, and being by the Grace of GOD early allured to the Study of true Piety and practical Godliness, he was at the Beginning of our late happy Revolution called to Labour in the LORD's Vineyard, and ordained Minister of the Gospel at Tarrisburgh in the Shire of Air, from which he was transported to Saltreestoun in East-Lothian in the Year 1694, and from that

that to Edinburgh in the Year 1700, where he died much lamented May 15th, 1705. In each of these Places he had many Seals of his Ministry, by the Conversion of some, and Edification of others of the Body of Christ: Many a sweet Communion and excellent Day of the Son of Man did GOD honour him with, and scarce would you have seen a sweeter Face of a Congregation than his used to be: His Conversation with Persons of every Quality and Condition was savoury, pleasant and edifying; he was an Interpreter one among a Thousand to these who were broken in their Hearts, and wounded in their Minds, was very useful to the Sick and Dying, was mighty in the Scriptures, eminent in Prayer, diligent in his Work, frequent and serious in Intercourse with GOD. These Sermons were all preached on ordinary Sabbaths to his ordinary Auditory in the New North Kirk of Edinburgh, except some few on extraordinary Occasions, as you will see by Perusal of them: Had he lived to have polished them for the Press, they might have come forth more full, and in a finer Dress; But such was his Humility and Self-denial, that he never desired to appear in Print: His Hearers being deprived of his Labours as in mid-time of his Days, were very desirous some of his Writings might appear in Publick; and when in his last Sickness one of his nearest Friends seeming to be afflicted with the apprehended Loss of him, he said from his Death-bed, My Sermons on the Twelfth Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews may be a sweet Cordial and useful Directory to Persons under Distress. This, with the savoury Remembrance of how useful they had been from the Pulpit, made many desire to see them from the Press. So his Notes which he had prepared in his Closet were committed to a Friend, who knew his Characters and Way of Writing to be revised: But he having neither heard these Sermons from the Pulpit, nor had any Doubles from these that wrote them with the short Hand, the Reader cannot expect them so full as they were preached; Beside, there was a Majesty and Pleasantness in the Author's Delivery from the Pulpit that cannot be expressed in Print, especially in a posthumous Work not finished by his own Hand. The particular Sermons could not be separate and divided, there being no Division in the Manuscript; but the Reader is at no Loss, having no Pulpit Repetitions, but the Subject closely handled in the Author's own Words and Method. It is hoped these Sermons may be very acceptable to
the

the Household of Faith, and tho' not finished by the Author's own Hand, yet may be of singular Use for promoting the Power of Piety, and for directing and encouraging the Saints in afflicting and shaking Times; and in particular, that they will be Welcome to the Author's Friends, Hearers and Christian Acquaintances, who were wont to think it edifying to have the least of private Converse with such a spiritual and savoury Servant of Jesus Christ, and to be refreshed even to see his Face in a Pulpit; and now seeing you can see it no more, and probably may expect no more of his Writings than what is here Published, by which, tho' dead, he yet speaketh: I earnestly pray you may find spiritual Edification and Comfort thereby, that the same Spirit and Blessing which wont to be with the Preaching, may be with you in the Reading, and make it prosperous for your Souls good.

The first of these is the fact that the
 second of these is the fact that the
 third of these is the fact that the
 fourth of these is the fact that the
 fifth of these is the fact that the
 sixth of these is the fact that the
 seventh of these is the fact that the
 eighth of these is the fact that the
 ninth of these is the fact that the
 tenth of these is the fact that the

SERMONS

UPON

The Twelfth Chapter of the Epistle of
Paul the Apostle, to the Hebrews.

VERSE I.

*Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a
Cloud of Witnesses, let us lay aside every Weight, and the Sin
which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with Patience the
Race that is set before us.*

THE Penman of this Epistle is not unanimously agreed upon by Interpreters, some ascribing it to Luke, others to Barnabas, Clement, or some other of the Author. But that the Apostle Paul was the Penman, is the general Opinion of ancient Greek Writers, and of many Latine Authors Ancient and Modern; as is demonstrate by *Gerhardus Pannus, Whitaker, Dr. Olier* and others; and is evident, seeing the Apostle Paul, writing to the dispersed Jews in his second Epistle, Chap. 2. Vers. 15, 16. mentions it that *Heaven* the Long suffering of our Lord is Salvation; even as our beloved Brother Paul also, according to the Wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, *As also in this Epistle, speaking in some of these things, in which are true things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and without sense, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own Destruction.* Which Character exactly agrees to this Epistle. In which Mention is also made of Paul's known Companion Timothy, Chap. 13. v. 23. of his Bonds, Chap. 10. v. 33. which he did undergo at Rome, Acts, Chap. 28. about the time when he wrote this Epistle. The Doctrine therein contained is agreeable to what the Apostle Paul ordinarily taught, That *Jesus* had his

Completing

Completion in Christianity, the Vail of the Temple rent asunder, that they might discern the Church open to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; besides, that he concludes with his ordinar Valediction, *Chap. 13. v. 25.* the Signal by which his Epistles may be known, *2 Theff. 3. v. 17, 18.* The Reason why his Name is not prefixed may be, that the Prejudices the Jews had without solid ground taken up against him, as an Enemy to the Mosaical Law, should not hinder them from reading and considering this Epistle, as in Duty they were obliged. But the Matter is of less concern who is the Penman, since 'tis certain the Epistle it self is divinely inspired, indited by the Holy Ghost. It is directed to the *Hebrews*, who are so designed, not from *Heber* the Son of *Sela*, but from *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful, this being an Epithet given to him, *Gen. 14. 13. Abraham the Hebrew, i. e. the Passenger*; 'Tis directed to the *Hebrews* by Nation, but now become *Christians* by Profession, to the dispersed *Jews* who believed in Christ; compare *2 Pet. 3. 15. 1 Pet. 1. 1, 2.* What could be writ more proper to such than of the Abrogation of the Levitical Priesthood, of the surpassing Excellency of Christ's Priesthood, and of the various Duties necessary to be practised by them.

The Apostle from *Chapter 10. Verse 22* begins to Exhort to these Duties necessary to a Gospel-adorning Conversation, and especially to Constancy in Faith and Holiness: To this End he describes Faith, *Chapter 11. Vers. 1.* Next he confirms and illustrates the Description of it, by an Induction of the Fathers of the Old Testament, who were no otherways approved of God, and united to him, than by true and lively Faith, whose Steps these believing *Hebrews* should and must follow, if they expect the like Divine Approbation.

This Chapter contains a practical Improvement of the Doctrine proposed, confirmed and illustrate in the former, and we may take it up in three general Parts. 1. The Exhortation in hand is pressed from Testimonies before insisted upon, with new additional Motives, Encouragements and Directions to *Vers. 12. 24.* From *Vers. 12. to Vers. 18.* we have a Direction to special Duties, necessary to a due Compliance with the general Exhortation, and subservient to its compleat Observance. 2^d, From *Vers. 18. to the End of the Chapter*, there is a new cogent Argument to the same purpose, taken from the Comparison of the two States of the *Law* and *Gospel*, with their Original, Nature and Effects.

In the first general Part of the Chapter, we may consider, *First*, The Deduction of the Exhortation, from the foregoing Instances and Examples, *Vers. 1. 24.* The Confirmation of it from the Consideration of Christ himself and his Sufferings, *Vers. 2. 3. 34.* The same is pressed from their known Duty, *Vers. 4. 44.* From the Nature of the things they were to undergo, as far as they were afflictive, with the certain Advantages and Benefits they should receive by them, from *Vers. 5. to v. 12.*

My Text is an Inference drawn from the former Doctrine, pressing to Constancy and Patience in bearing Afflictions, and other Duties of a Christian Conversation, *Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, &c.* where consider, 1. The Premisses or Principles the Apostle works upon, *Seeing we are compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses.* 2. The Practical Inference deduced from these Premisses, which are two, the one concerning the Privative Part of our Duty, *Let us lay aside every Weight, and the Sin that doth so easily beset us:* The other concerning the Positive Part, *And let us run with Patience the Race set before us.*

Hebrews XII. Vers. 1.

3

I begin with the first Part of the Text, viz. *The Principles the Apostle builds the Practical Inference upon.* But before I enter upon a particular Explication of the Words, I shall premise, 1. That the whole Text is Metaphorical, consisting of divers Figures, the Principal whereof is, that the Study of Christianity is held forth by running a Race for a Prize. 2. This Manner of illustrating Spiritual things by Temporal, conveys Light to the Understanding, and hath great Influence upon the Affections. 3. The Text being so Metaphorical, the Exposition is not so much to be taken from the precise Signification of the Words, as from the Matter intended by this pathetic Exhortation. This being premised; In the first part of the Text we have *a Motive enforcing the following Exhortation*; And in it consider, 1. *The Persons to whom the Motive is proposed, Seeing we also*; The Holy Apostle puts himself among the rest, to sharpen and put an Edge upon his own Spirit, and the better to bear home the Exhortation upon these to whom he writes, engaging them with himself, I (says he) and all other Believers are obliged to imitate such a noble Example. 2y, *Consider the Motive it self, We are compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses*; and here the eminent ancient Saints are presented to us, 1. *As Witnesses.* 2. *As a Cloud of Witnesses.* 3. *As compassing us about.* First, *As Witnesses*, because they bear Testimony to God and his Truths. 1. By their Faith, *John 3. 33. He that hath received his Testimony, hath set to his Seal that God is true*, that is, a Man who solidly receives and embraces the Promises, and expresses his Faith by Cheerfulness and Patience under Difficulties, he gives it under his Hand and Seal, and proclaims it to the World, that he hath to do with a true and faithful God. 2. They witness in the Fruits of their Faith, giving us an Instance of God's Fidelity toward them, who faithfully adhere to, and firmly believe in his Promises; therefore the same Apostle exhorts, *Heb. 6. 12. Be followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.* 2. We have *a Cloud*, yea *a great Cloud of Witnesses*; various Reasons are given why they are called a Cloud, as, 1. Clouds flee high, so their Hearts were above with Christ their Treasure. 2. For Fruitfulness of their distilling sweet sapping Showers to us. 3. For their cooling and overshadowing Virtue, their Experience comforts Believers in all successive Generations. 4. Others will have them so Designed, with Allusion to the Pillar of Cloud which conducted the Israelites through the Wilderness: And as this was a Guide through their several Journeys, so we are to take the Prophets for an Example of suffering Affliction, and of Patience. 5. These Witnesses are called a Cloud, because of their great Number, a Cloud being a thick Conglomeration of many humid Vapours condensed into one Body. *Ezek. 38. 9.* a great Multitude of Men is called a Cloud, this last Reason seems solid. 3y, In this Motive these Witnesses are presented *as compassing us about*, they are recorded for our Use and Pattern, whatever Trial, Affliction, Temptation or Duty we are put upon, we have the like undergone by these ancient Worthies which may tend to our Direction, Support, and Encouragement. From this Part of the Text already explained,

Observe, 1. *That the infinite Wisdom, and condescending Love of God doth eminently discover it self, in furnishing his People with a plentiful Store-house in his written Word, for Confirmation of their Faith, and Through-bearing in their Duties.*

Obs. 2. *That it is the indispensable Duty of the People of God, to imitate and follow these, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.*

Obs. 3. *That for us to succumb or draw back from a holy Profession and Practice, while thus compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, will eminently aggravate our Guilt.*

Sermons upon

I begin with Observation first, *God in his Wisdom and Goodness hath stored his Word with notable Examples of such as proved the Truth of Religion, and lived up to it in their Practice for the Confirmation of our Faith, and directing us in our Duty, James 5. 10. Heb. 6. 12.*

In Prosecution of this Doctrine, I shall only represent some Notable Advantages that arise from these Examples proposed to us; as *First*, The Duties we are Exhorted to, are in them represented to us as possible, and that on Terms not uneasy or grievous: When we consider the Difficulties from within and from without, we may be ready to think it is impossible for us to continue in Duty, and gain Heaven at the End: To obviate this, the Apostle shews, Faith will carry us safely through the greatest Difficulties we may meet with in Religion, as well as the Cloud of Witnesses who have gone before us. *2dly*, Great Examples do stir up and animate the Minds of Men to do like them, or if possible to out-do them. If it be asked, *How shall I ever be able to do this?* Answer, *By having the same Spirit these Cloud of Witnesses were honoured with.* Let Examples of Persons, Valiant and Heroick in their Actions, be set before Men of weak pusillanimous Temper, it will awake and affright, but never encourage them; but if set before Persons of a brave Spirit, there will be a different Effect; now the Spirit and Principles which acted the Worthies of God, whose Example is set before us, was that of Faith, *2 Cor. 4. 13. We having the same Spirit of Faith, we also believe, and therefore speak.* *3dly*, These Examples are so represented to us, as plainly to discover and point out where our Danger lyes on the one Hand, and our Assistance and Supply on the other, when this is known, our Duty is easily perform'd. Now in these Examples, we plainly discern the Temptations did befall the Saints, the Occasions of them, and the Advantage, Power and Prevalency of their Spiritual Enemies: Again we may Read what Course the Saints took for their Relief, what Application they made to God in their Distresses, and wherein they reposed their Confidence for Success, as we may find by Variety of Instances in the preceding Chapter. *4thly*, These Instances represent to us, what Inconveniencies and Disturbances befall us in our Course of Obedience, which ought not to make us Heartless and Despondent; but oblige us to turn in to our Strong Holds. *5thly*, By this Cloud of Witnesses we discover the certain End of a Course of Holy Obedience; all these who now are at Rest with God in Glory, were sometimes conflicting with Corruptions and Temptations, undergoing Reproaches and Persecutions, labouring in Painful Duties; if we follow them in their Work, we shall not fail to share in their Reward.

Obs. 2. 'Tis the indispensable Duty of Gods Peculiar People to imitate and follow the Example of this Cloud of Witnesses in the Ways of Holiness: For this End are they set before us, that we may do as they have done, Heb. 6. 12. Ja. 5. 10. 1 Cor. 11. 1. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

In Prosecution of this Note, I shall First shew wherein we are to imitate this Cloud of Witnesses; Secondly, why we are to imitate and follow their Example; Thirdly, Improve the Whole.

As to the First, Let us imitate the Cloud of Witnesses, *first* in their Endeavours to be like God in his Communicable Attributes, and to Glorify him in his Relations; let us therefore be like him in his Goodness, Holiness, Meekness, Patience, Truth, Wisdom, Faithfulness. Let us Glorify Him as our Owner; *1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a Price, therefore glorify God in your Body and in your Spirit which are Gods;* Glorify Him as your Legislator, by obeying his Laws, as your bounti-
full

Hebrews XII. Verse 1.

3

ful Benefactor, from whom is all the Good we have received, and all the Happiness we hope to possess.

2^{ly}, Having such a Cloud of Witnesses, let us imitate them in placing Religion in the Saving, Practical and Experimental Knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, *Joh. 17. 3. 1 Cor. 2. 2.* this is the Light that governs the Will and Practice, which feeds Prayers, Meditations and Discourse, repels Temptations, maintains Hope, and is the Christians daily Work and Recreation, his Food and his Feast. By this, Man may see, that Religion is no Matter of Names, Words and trifling Controversies; but the greatest and most excellent Subject in the World, most Divine, where most of God appeareth. By this, we may see, Religion consists not in Uncertainties, but is Sure, and past Doubt; it loses not its Authority or Reverence by the Divisions, Wrestlings and Wranglings of Sects of different Minds; 'tis no Matter of Indifference, one may do well enough without, but of absolute Necessity to Salvation.

3^{ly}, Let us Imitate this Cloud of Witnesses, in their Faith. This includes, *first*, Knowledge, by this it is expressed, *Isa. 53. 11.* there can be no Faith without it: The Implicit Faith of the Papists, believe as the Church believes, is good for nothing, but to lead Men to the Pit; God begins the New Creation as He did the Old, *Let there be Light, AEs 26. 18.* 2^{ly}, Faith includes Assent to the Principles of the Doctrine of Christianity, and especially to these, that there is absolute Necessity of a Salvation and of the Saviour, and that our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath satisfied the Justice of God, by the Merits of his Death and Purchase, is the only Saviour, *AEs 4. 12. Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved.* The 3^d Act of Faith is Recumbence, Receiving and Relying on Christ alone for Salvation; the former Acts are the Body, this the Soul of Faith, the Essence and Formality of it, which unregenerated Souls do not reach. Now because there be many Mistakes here, and these most Dangerous, as in a Matter of Eternal Life and Death, the first Stone and Structure of our Salvation being Founded upon this, let us more narrowly enquire, by what Actions the Soul expresseth this Saving Act of Faith, that we may therein imitate this Cloud of Witnesses; and *first*, *The Soul* *hath a Sense of Sin and Misery*, sees Justice ready to fall on him, finds Wrath ready to kindle within him, hath a quick Sense of it, so as his Eye affects his Heart. 2^{ly}, *He rejects other Dependancies and Supports for Salvation*, a Sinner at a Distance from Christ depends on something within himself, but not on Christ; but when he finds his lost Condition, he cries out, *None but Christ.* 3^{ly}, *The Soul flies to the Death and Merits of the blessed Jesus*, to defend him from Wrath and the Sentence of the Law; as a Man pursued, by the Avenger of Blood, flies to the City of Refuge, *Heb. 6. 18.* 4^{ly}, *The Soul leans and stays it self on Christ*, *Psal. 18. 18. The Lord is my Stay. 2 Chron. 14. 11. Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, we have no Power, we rest on thee.* *Isa. 50. 10. Psal. 112. 7. 8.* 5^{ly}, *The Believer applies and makes Use of Christ*, as one pinch'd with Hunger and fainting for Thrust, would use Meat or Drink, *John 6. 56.* 6^{ly}, Another Act of Faith is Submission to God, to dispose of us, as He pleaseth, *Psal. 37. 7.* 7^{ly}, He resolves to adhere to the Lord in all Events, and go on in Obedience to him, *Psal. 71. 16. I will go on in the Strength of the Lord.*

4^{ly}, Let us imitate this Cloud of Witnesses, in the Grand Scope of their Conversation and Practice, which was to please God; *Heb. 11. 5.* who carry his Approbative Sentence, to keep themselves in the Love of God; Carnal Interest is not the End nor Rule

of this Life, but God is the Christians End, to please Him, His Work and Reward in which he is comforted, tho' Fleth and the World were never so much displeased.

5b, Follow the Example of these Witnesses in the Manner of their Life, Heb. 11. 13. *They confessed they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth.* If it be asked, *How did they carry as Strangers and Pilgrims?* Answer, 1. in respect of the Place of their Abode, while present in the World, they were far from Home, their Habitation here, is but an Inns on their Journey, and the Men of the World be Men of a strange Language, strange Customs and Laws, far differing from that of their own Country. 2. In respect of their Design, their Motion is still Homewards, the Country pleases them not, nor they it; but they are bound for a City, whose Builder and Maker is God, Heb. 11. 10. 3. In respect of their Enjoyments, they are but accomodate here as Strangers, they have more in Hope than in Hand, no Matter for State & Superfluities on a Journey, tho' they be Princes, Kings Sons and Heirs of a Crown; 'tis safest for them to walk in Disguise, no Matter what others take them for, since in the End, God will approve them, 1 John 3. 2. 4. They are Strangers in respect of their Usage and Entertainment, Heb. 11. 36, 37, 38. *Others had Trial of cruel Mockings, Scourgings; yea, moreover of Bonds and Imprisonments, they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the Sword, of whom the World was not worthy, they wandered in Deserts and Mountains, in Dens and Caves of the Earth.* John 17. 14. *The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world.* 5. They are Strangers, in respect of their Continuance; a Stranger stays not long in one Place, 1 Chron. 29. 15. *We are Strangers before thee, and Sojourners, as were all our Fathers, our Days on the Earth are as a Shadow, and there is no Abiding.* 6. Their Relations, their dearest Friends, are in another Country, their Father, Husband, Elder Brother, their Comforter and Greater Part of their Fellow Brethren are all in Heaven; he who lives at Distance from his Relations, may well pass for a Stranger.

6b, Follow the Example of this Cloud of Witnesses, in their Patience, Heb. 6. 12. *Be ye not slothful, but Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises;* but of this, we may have Occasion to speak from the last Clause in the Text.

7b, Imitate this Cloud of Witnesses, in the Content, Satisfaction and Serenity they conceived from their Interest in God; in this they could encourage themselves under all Crosses and Losses, Psal. 73. 25, 26. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on Earth whom I desire besides thee, my Flesh and my Heart faileth, but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever: They live by Faith, and not by Sight.* 2 Cor. 5. 7. *They rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God.* Rom. 5. 35. they can trust him to Death, who hath said, *I'll never leave thee nor forsake thee;* their Fears and Tears are accompany'd with Faith and Hope. It would be difficult to perswade a Proud Worldling, a Covetous Man, or a Drunkard, that a Poor complaining Comfortless Believer is Happier than he; nay, you must shew him a Proof of the Excellency of the Believer's Life, you must give him a Bunch of the Grapes of the Land, if you'll have him go to the Land of Promise; Lo here it is.

8b, Follow these Witnesses, in their Heart burning with Love to God in Christ, may not your Hearts burn within you to Himself, His Holiness, His Precepts, His People; This is the Great and New Commandment, O rare Charge, Song 5. 8. *If ye find my Beloved, tell Him I'm sick of Love.*

9b, Follow their Example, by being of a Publick Spirit, designing and promoting God's Glory and Honour, denying our own Gain and Interest. The selfish narrow Minded Man that's all for himself, is a Boil or Imposthume in Humane Societies; they

for

Hebrews XII. Vers. 1.

7

forfeit their Communion with the Body of Christ, and deserve that none should care for them, who care for none but themselves.

10ly; Follow this Cloud of Witnesses in Humility; 'tis lovely in the Eyes of every Body, when Man loves not too high Thoughts of himself, seeks not to be overvalued by others, as Great, Wise, or Good, envies not others who are such, but in Honour prefers them. Having opened wherein we are to imitate this Cloud of Witnesses.

I proposed, Secondly; to give some Reasons why it is our Duty to follow their Example. And, 1. Because this is the End wherefore they are set out to us as Patterns and Examples in the forementioned Grace; and many more, which I cannot now insist upon, Heb. 6. 12. *Be ye followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.* 2ly; The Lord our Sovereign and Supream Law-giver hath expressly commanded us to follow their Example, Jam. 5. 10. *Take, my Brethren, the Prophets, for an Example of suffering Affliction, and of Patience.* 1 Corinth. 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ;* It is not their Infirmitie, but their Graces we should imitate. 3ly, In them as in a Glass we see the *Trita Via*, the plain path Road to Heaven. 4ly, There is rich Advantage to us by these noble Examples: In them we have a Summary of what God calls Trials and Temptations that we may be exposed to by our persevering in the Faith; and in them we see what rich Supplies the Saints got out of the infinite Treasure of Christ's Fulness, and we may go thither and be supplied from the same.

Use 1. Hence be Informed, *what an honourable State Christianity and true Godliness is;* To testify this, God hath set up so many Lights in the Primitive Ages of the Church to shine on Men, to the Glory of his Holiness, as the Sun and Stars do to the Glory of his Power. No wonder the Powers of Darkness bend themselves to obscure this Sacred Light, the Prince of Darkness is the Enemy of this *Father of Lights*.

Use 2. *How lamentable is it, that there be so very few to imitate the Example of this noble Cloud of Witnesses;* but on the contrary, Mens lives are generally a counterpart to theirs, who are set up by God as our Pattern: A Flood of Tears is too little to lament this Scandal of the Christian World.

Use 3. *Shew your selves followers of these, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises;* you call your selves Christians, what do ye more than others? than a Seneca, a Cicero, or Socrates, what is in your Way to convince an Infidel, to convert a Formalist or Hypocrite?

Use 4. *See how great Gratitude and Thankfulness you owe your gracious Lord, for sending his Spirit in His Saints, exemplifying his holy Word on the holy Souls of these who are gone before us, that we may follow the Footsteps of the Flock.*

Obf. 3. *That for us to succumb, or draw back in our holy Profession, or Practice, while thus compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, who endured to the End, will eminently aggravate our Guilt;* To this end are they proposed to prevent our Fainting.

The Truth of this Doctrine may further appear, if we consider (1.) That by these Witnesses, the Truth of Religion is demonstrate; and our Succumbing insinuates as if it were but a Sham. (2.) By these Witnesses appears an unspeakable Sweetness in Spiritual Comforts, by which their Souls were cheated in sore Trials, yet we reject this, with a *This Evil is of the Lord, why wait I for the Lord any longer.* (3.) The Faithfulness of God is conspicuous in these Witnesses, making out his Promises, hearing their Prayers, supplying their Wants; But all this we cast down and deny by our Succumbing.

cumbing and Fainting, saying in Effect, Religion is but an *Imposture* planted in on the Christian World.

For Use of this Note, I shall only speak a few Words for Conviction of such as draw back from a holy Profession. And 1. No Field is so bad as that which hath been forsaken for its Barrenness, better Grain will grow upon that which hath never been tilled; The greatest Representation of Hell upon Earth, is, an Apostate Professor. 2. 'Tis a righteous Thing with God to give up such to all manner of Wickedness; so did he deal with the Gentiles for their abusing the Light of Nature, Rom. 1. 24. to the 32. *As they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate Mind, to do these things, which are not convenient.* If it be inquired, how doth God thus give up with Apostate Professors? *Ans.* 1. By leaving them wholly to themselves, taking off all effectual Restraint from off them, *Mat. 13. 14. Let them alone, they be blind Leaders of the Blind.* Hosea 4. 17. *Ephraim is jagged to Idols, let him alone.* God will neither Reprove, Help nor Hinder them. 2. By pouring out a Spirit of Slumber and deep Security, so as they take Notice of Nothing in the Works or Word of God, that should stir them up to amend their Ways, or restrain them from Sin, *Rom. 11. 8.* 3. God leaves them to irrevocable final Obstinacy, *Isai. 6. 9, 10, 11. Make the Heart of this People fat, and make their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes, lest they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Hearts, and convert and be healed.* O how dreadful is this Judgment! Beware then of Apostacy from the Truth which leads to it. For Conviction of such barren Professors, I shall add a 3^d Consideration, That there are special Sins peculiar to them, as 1. An Indulgence to some secret pleasing or profitable Lust, allowing themselves therein, and yet under more than ordinary Profession before the World. 2. A constant Neglect of private or secret Duties, these being seldom performed but when pressed by outward Accidents and Occasions, *Isai. 43. 22, 23. Thou hast not called on me, O Jacob, thou hast been weary of me O Israel; A Hypocrite will not always call upon God,* he may be useful to his Family, and unprofitable for his own Salvation. 3. A total Want of some Graces both in their Principle and Exercise, is a great Evidence of such a Condition, no Occasion draws them forth to Exercise.

So much for the Premises from which the Apostle draws this Inference. I come now to the second Part of the Text being a practical Inference and Exhortation deduced from these Premises in these Words; *Let us lay aside every Weight, and the Sin that doth so easily beset us, &c.* Where we have 1. Two Obstructions and Barasses in our Way Heavenward. 2. How these are to be disposed of. As to the former, the first Obstruction is *every Weight*, where the Apostle alludes to Terms proper to a Race, in which Men strip themselves of every thing burdensome and heavy, that they may be lighter of Foot, so by it here is understood, that which renders our Heavenly Progress tedious and cumbersome, as the Delights and Cares of a present World, a Multitude of secular Concerns, whereby we are inveigled and cumbered in our Way to Heaven, *Luke 21. 34. Take heed lest at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and the Cares of this Life.* The Second Obstruction is, *The Sin that so easily besets us*; by this is understood, 1. The Original Corruption of our Nature, which by the same Apostle, *Rom. 7. 13, 17.* is called *iniquitas* with an Article, so here *the iniquitas*, that Sin being the Mother of all Sin. 2. Yet Original Sin is not absolutely intended as exclusive of all actual Sin, but with respect to a certain Way of exciting its Efficacy by some predominant Idols, which have the ascendant of the Soul. Original Sin thus acting may

may be said only to beset us, since it hath all the Advantage of soliciting and drawing our Minds off Duty, and weakening us in the Discharge thereof; it hath easy Access to hinder us in our Christian Race, and to expose us to many Dangers; For (1.) 'Tis always present with us, and never wanting to any Occasion, dwelling with, abiding in, and cleaving to us, is still ready to disturb our Peace; when Danger appears, it cries, Spare thy self; when Satan tempts, it solicits by carnal Wisdom, to comply with the Temptation. (2.) It hath a remaining Interest in all the Faculties and Powers of the Soul; 'tis not as a Disease that weakens one single part of the Body, but as an evil Habit, that infects and weakens the Whole.

2^{ly}, It remains to explain how we are to dispose of these Obstructions in our Christian Course, in the words, *lay aside*: As to the Weight of Earthly Cares and Concerns, 'tis not absolutely required, we part with and forgo our lawful Possession of them, this is not ordinary, tho' there may be Seasons wherein Christ's Direction to the Young Man may take Place, *Go and Sell all that thou hast, and give to the Poor; then take Me in, the place of all*: Many in the Primitive Times sold their Possessions, distributing what they had to the Poor; and in case of great Persecution in one Nation, and great Opportunities of propagating the Gospel in other Places (as the Case then was) may yet be practised. But positively, to lay aside these Weights of a present World, imports (1.) A willing Readiness and Resolution to part with them cheerfully for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, if called thereunto; so did the believing Jews *joyfully take the spoiling of their Goods*, Heb. 10. 34. When this Resolution is prevalent, the Soul will be much eased of the weight of Earthly Affairs. (2.) A sedulous and diligent subduing of our Hearts and Affections, with respect to all things of this Nature; this removes whatever is burthensome to this Weight. (3.) It imports continual Observation of what Difficulties and Hindrances these things may cast in our Minds, either in our general Christian Course, or with respect to our particular Duties; to be sure, Worldly Cares and Pleasures operate in our Minds, by Love, Fear, Care or Delight, with a Variety of perplexing Thoughts about them, unless we incessantly watch against them.

As to the laying aside the Sin that easily besets us, this must be done *absolutely and universally* in Design and Endeavour; 2 Cor. 7. 1. — *Let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*; if we be not daily taken up in mortifying and subduing this Sin, it will prove a prevalent Hindrance in all the Duties of our Christian Course. In the following part of the Text, *and let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us*, we have the positive part of our Duty, which shall be afterwards explained. In this which we have now explained, we have the privative part of our Duty: And therefore,

Observe 1st, That the Cares and Pleasures of the World being a great and burthensome weight in our Christian Race and Course, ought to be put off and laid aside.

Observe 2^d, That in order to our succeeding in our Christian Course, 'tis necessary we endeavour the Mortification of Sin, and especially of the Sin which easily besets us.

I begin with Observe. 1. The Cares and Pleasures of the World are a great and burthensome weight in our Christian Race and Course, and therefore are to be laid aside.

To prepare this for our Use, I shall first shew what these Cares and Pleasures of the World are, that are so weighty and so burthensome. 2. How these are to be laid aside.

As to the 1st. These weights that are to be laid aside, are; (1.) *Earthly Employments and Business*, tho' not sinful in themselves, yet the Abuse of them may hinder us in our Christian Course. (2.) *Carnal Delights, Pleasures and Enjoyments of the World* hinder us in our Motion toward Heaven.

As to the First, That *Earthly Employments and Business*, tho' not sinful in themselves, yet in the Abuse of them, may hinder our Christian Course, may appear evident to a Conviction: For 1. When Men are entirely taken up in *Earthly Things*, and their utmost Care terminate in the *Things of the World*, crying out as *Psalm 4. 6. Who will show us any Good*; how much is the *Work of Salvation*, our *Eternal Concern* then slighted? 2. When our Hearts sink too deep into the *Things of the World*, we are thereby made careless of, and diverted from Religion, acting as if this Life were the ultimate End of all our Actions, labouring more for the Bread that perisheth, to gratify our carnal Appetites, than for the Bread that endureth to Life Eternal. 3. Men are oft so much employ'd and over-loaded with Business, as to hinder the Tranquillity of the Mind, they have no leisure for a free Thought about a future Life. 4. Some Men abuse *Worldly Business* to an Occasion for Sin, they direct the *Things of this Life* to a bad End, to satisfy and inflame their irregular Appetites. 5. This excessive Application to *Worldly Business*, engrosses almost our whole Time, that there is nothing remaining to be spent for the Concerns of the Life to come; how many plead this for an Excuse, I have no Time for Reading, Praying or Worshipping God in my Family? Ah! these Excuses will make you more inexcusable in the Great Day of Accounts. 6. This also distracts the Mind and Affections, so many *Worldly Ideas and Representations* crowd in, as though the Man had time, he cannot get his Mind sedate and composed, he is not Master of himself; and thus either absolutely he neglects the Duties of Religion, or performs them very slothfully. 7. This Excess in *Secular Affairs*, eminently obstructs Sanctification and Holiness, and leads into Sin and Snare; 'tis impossible to love Religion and Holiness, when the Heart is set upon the World; Christ tells us, *We cannot serve two Masters, if any Man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him*, 1 John 2. 15. therefore we ought to buy as tho' we possessed not, use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of it passeth away, 1 Corinth. 7. 30. if your Heart be too much set on it, ye'll be ready with Demas, for love of the World, to forsake Christ in a time of Persecution. 8. This excessive Application to the World, hurries you to Infinite Disorders; he who is thus filled with the Thoughts and Solicitudes of this Life, is a Slave to his Senses and Passions, is laid open every Moment to a thousand Temptations, which he is not able to withstand: So that tho' his Business be in it self lawful, yet by Abuse, he makes it Criminal to himself, and a heavy Weight, necessary to be laid aside, if we would run the Christian Race and gain Heaven.

Next I come to shew, that *Carnal Delights, Pleasures and Enjoyments* are a great weight, which hinder us in our Motion toward Heaven, and therefore to be laid aside: And this is evident, 1. From our Lord's Direction, *Luke 21. 34. Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and the Cares of this Life*; where Surfeiting and Drunkenness is not to be taken in the gross Notion of Reeling and Vomiting, as if to avoid these, were a Compliance with Christ's Direction; but when the Heart is thereby made heavy and dull, unfit for Prayer, and relishes no Spiritual Things, when Delights of the Flesh clogg, faulter and abate the Vigour and Cheerfulness should be in the Worship of God. This cannot but be a great Enemy, for it strengthens Sin, the great Enemy of the Soul; therefore the Apostle

Hebrews XII. Verse 1.

11

Paul says, 1 Cor. 9. 27. I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection; if you do not subdue your Pleasures, they will subdue and bring you under their Power, 1 Cor. 6. 12. 2ly, These Pleasures starve the better Part, eat out the Life of Religion, check the very first Workings of the Grace of God, Jude v. 19. they bring to a lawless Excess, and at length to Apostacy, falling from the Ways of God. 3ly, The Affluence of Carnal Delights stuffs Man with Pride and Self-conceit, causing him apprehend Felicity to consist in present Enjoyments, How hard is it for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? 4ly, Delights and Pleasures make a Man so soft-natured and delicate in his Temper, that he is not able to bear the Cross. 5ly, These also make Man formal and dead-hearted, as he cannot be at Pains to stir up himself in Spiritual Duties to put forth Strength to take hold of God therein. 6ly, These make Man confident in himself, Earthly and base Minded: All which Evils, are Weights very obstructive to our Progress in our Christian Course, and therefore necessary to be laid aside.

I proposed 2ly, to enquire how these Weights are to be put off and laid aside? And *First, As to Earthly Business and Employ, which tho' lawful in it self, yet being abused, may hinder us in our Christian Course, this is to be laid aside, 1. In the excessive Pursuit thereof; pursue it in Moderation, lay it not too much to Heart, rejoice not too much at any Prosperity, be not dejected above Measure at any Disaster that may happen, and be not too hot upon any Design. 2. Avoid Multiplicity of Business and Excess of Employments, as much as is consistent with the Duties of your Calling; let every one consider what he is fit for, and what he is called to, and go no further. 3ly, Reserve the necessary Time and Care for what we owe to God, to minding Salvation, the most important of all Concerns; be oft filled with the Thoughts, that ye are Mortal; that there is another Life after this; that Worldly Cares will yield small Comfort at Death-bed; these thoughts may help us to shun many Disorders.*

As to Carnal Delights, Pleasures and Enjoyments, these are to be laid aside, 1st, Habitually in the Frame of the Heart, God and Christ must be loved more than all things; Believers are required to hate all, in comparison of Christ, that is, to love all with a lesser Love, which is comparatively Hatred. 2ly, Lay aside all Actually when Christ calls for it; as in these Cases, 1. In Times of Danger and Trial, when Christ calls to lay down all at His Feet, as a common Stock: It was the Young Man's Sin in the Gospel, he would not obey Christ in, and it cost Ananias and Sapphira their Lives. 2. When Christ calls for it, for maintaining his Worship and Ordinances, and defending the same, Gal. 6. 6. Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good Things. 3. Ye are actually to part with all things, so far as they stand in Competition with his Interest, which oft happens in time of Persecution; we must lose all to keep Christ and a good Conscience. In a Word, the laying aside Earthly Cares, Delights and Pleasures, is a right Using of the World, in Subordination to the great Work of Salvation; which consists, 1. In using all created Satisfaction, so as to have a single Design and Eye to God and His Glory, 1 Cor. 10. 31. Matth. 6. 22. to a Believer, the whole World should be but a Glass, to represent the Excellency of God reconciled in Christ. 2. In using Creature-comforts with Moderation and Contentment; according to that Noble Attainment of the Apostle, Phil. 4. 11, 12, 13. I have learned, in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content; I know both how to be abased, and how to abound, every where, and in all Things, I am instructed both to be Full and to be Hungry, both to Abound and suffer Need; I can do all Things, through Christ strengthening me; what's wanting in the Saints Provision, they make up by Contentment. 3. Christians must

must use the World as their Servant, and enjoy God in Christ as their Friend, for he who makes the World his Friend, makes God his Enemy, *John 4. 4.* What is already said upon this Doctrine is Practical, I therefore shut it up with

One Use of Exhortation, *Lay aside the Weight of worldly Cares, Pleasures and Enjoyments*; to overcharge your selves therewith, is a Temper unbecoming those who bear the Character of *Christians*: To dissuade you from it, I shall drop a few *Motives*, and conclude with some *Directions*.

Motive first, Consider there is nothing in the World commensurate to the *Desires* and *Longings* of your Immortal Souls, which are so infinitely extended, as no finite Object can replenish them: Take a thousand blown Bladders, will they ballast a Ship of great Burthen, much less load it; or fill a Man's Stomach with Wind, is it like solid Food? Yet such Food and filling are the things of the World, in Comparison of Christ's *Manna*; like a Fish caught with a Bait, having a Hook in it's Heart, so is vain Man gulled with the Images of this World. *2ly*, There is great Unconformity and Disproportion betwixt these things and the Soul of Man, in respect of Nutriment and Sustainment; as by Nature there is a proper Nutriment assigned to every Creature that hath Vegetative, Sensitive, or Natural Life; to some the humid Moisture of the Earth and Dew of Heaven, to others Grass, Hay, Corn, and the like: So in Proportion God hath assigned Nourishment to the Spiritual Life, *Man lives not by Bread alone, but by Christ, who is the Bread that comes down from Heaven, and gives Life to the World, John 6. 33.* *3ly*, Our Bodies are Earth, of Earth, tending to the Earth, *Gen. 3. 19.* but our Soul from Heaven, it hath a celestial Original, it is *Divina particula Aura*, it is the Inspiration of the Almighty, *creando infusa, infundendo creata*; Here the Soul is a Stranger for a time, banished and exiled, like *Noah's Dove*, never at rest till she return to God, nothing here can satisfy, content or compleat her Happiness. *4ly*, We are Created to more excellent Ends than any other Creature whatsoever, Angels excepted; born that we may know and love God, when we are not doing this, we err and do wickedly. *5ly*, As for you Believers, I am sure, of all Persons ye are least indebted to this World and things of it, oft ye split on this Rock, till ye be brought to cry, *Now, Lord, what wait I for, my Hope is in thee*: Your Stock is above these sublunary things; for the Eagle to nestle it self with a Sow in the Dunghill is highly unseemly. Yea this is ingratitude to God, who opened your Eyes to see himself as the chief Good; it is Perfidy, did ye not engage ye should be for God, and not for another, saying, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth I can desire besides thee, Psal. 73. 25.* Yea thus to overcharge your selves with the things of the World, is a great Act of abusing Folly, to be crawling among the Worms of the Valley, while we should be soaring above the Clouds like Birds of Paradise, whose Wings are covered with Silver, and their Feathers with yellow Gold.

I conclude this *Doctrine* with a few *Directions*, to help you in laying aside this overcharging weight of earthly Concerns, Pleasures or Enjoyments. And, 1. Pray fervently and frequently, this will carry the Strength of your Thoughts and Cares to more noble Objects. *2ly*, Meditate much on Spiritual Subjects relating to the Practice and Power of Godliness. *3ly*, Learn exactly the Vanity, the perishing and imaginary Nature of the Creature. *4ly*, Be frequent in ejaculatory Desires of the Soul to Heaven, in the interval of Holy Duties. *5ly*, Let precious Christ be much in your Eye; your great Exercise being to gain his gracious sanctifying Presence. *6ly*, Frequently renew Covenant with God, and subscribe your selves willing to quit all things in the World, for the Enjoyment of himself, *Song 4. 8. Come with me from Lebanon,*

(my Spouse) look from the top of Amanu, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the Lions Den, from the Mountains of the Leopards. With Christ are durable Riches and Righteousness. At his right Hand are Pleasures for evermore, he comes under the sweetest Relations to you, Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name; he himself is All in All Cases and Conditions, and they who have him, shall want nothing that is Good. 7ly, Look oft by Faith to things that are above with Christ, to things not seen which are Eternal, This is the Victory that overcomes the World, even our Faith, 1 John 5. 4. By Faith you secure a better Inheritance than the World, the one thing Needful that cannot be taken from you: By Faith you discover the present good things of the VWorld cannot advance, nor it's evil things, (as Losses or Crosses) hinder your Happiness: This looses your Heart from the present VWorld, and makes you look for Glory to come. 8ly, Endeavour a suitable Carriage under the various Dispensations of Providence, to be content in Straits, humble when you enjoy Honour, patient under Crosses, couragious in wrestling with God by Prayer, in acting Faith on God under Difficulties, and in doing or suffering for God's Glory when Occasion calls you to it.

Obf. 2. That in order to our succeeding in our Christian Race and Course, it is necessary we endeavour to mortifie and lay aside Sin, especially Original and Predominating Lusts, called in the Text, the Sin that easily besets us.

To prepare this for our Use, I shall shew, 1. What it is to lay aside and mortifie Sin. 2ly, What Sins are to be laid aside: 3ly, Why Sin must be thus mortified and subdued.

As to the first, what it is to lay aside and mortifie Sin? I Answer, there be some things among Men reckoned for mortifying Sins, which God will not so reckon; as, 1. *Papists* make it consist in some external Severities, as Whipping, going bare-footed, with Ropes about their middle, begging, living in Cells and Hermitages, Vows of Poverty, single Life, and the like; by which Sin is so far from being laid aside, that Pride and Self-righteousness is thereby quickned. Neither, 2ly, Doth it consist as some *Antinomians*, and carnal Professors of the Gospel pretend; in want of, and suppressing all Challenges for inward sense of Sin, this favours of monstrous Atheism. Neither, 3ly, As *Formalists* and *Hypocrites* pretend, doth it consist in refraining from outward Impieties and Immoralities, which the Light of Nature may deter Men from. Neither, 4ly, Doth it consist in lulling Sin asleep; true it is, a sleeping Man looks as if he were dead; so doth Sin, till on some Occasion 'tis awakened. 5ly, It consists not in Sins dying in Peace, when it thus appears, it may be really conquering the Soul, Luk. 11. 21. When a strong Man Armed keeps his Palace, his Goods are at Peace.

But positively to lay aside and crucifie Sin, consists, 1. In real hatred of it, David had laid aside Sin, when he says, I hate every false way, Psal. 119. 104. This Hatred hath three Properties, (1.) It is well grounded, the Christian hates Sin, because it is loathsome to a Holy God, and makes His Soul loath Sinners. (2.) It is Universal, Psal. 119. 104. I hate every false way; who hates not all Sin, hates really no Sin. (3.) The Believer hates Sin, so as never to be reconciled to it again; this Feud shall never resolve into Friendship, if otherwise, ye mock God, and invite Satan to return to your Souls with seven Spirits more wicked than himself, and so your last state shall be worse than the first, Matth. 12. 43, 44, 45. 2ly, If ye really lay aside Sin, ye will be grieved and sorrowful for it, and this must not be only a Tongue Sorrow, but such as affects, afflicts, wounds the Heart, humbles the Soul, and makes Sin loathsome, Lev. 16. 20, Zech. 12. 10. This Sorrow must also be Godly, 2 Cor. 7. 9. The Believer is grieved because

because the Sin is against God, *Psal. 51. 4.* not because it withholds Temporal Blessings, which was the Cause of *Esau's* Sorrow, but because 'tis against all God's Glorious Perfections, and withholds Spiritual Blessings from our Souls. *3ly*, Crucifying Sin, consists in actual parting with every Idol, reforming and turning from it, *Hos. 14. 8.* Ephraim shall say, what have I any more to do with Idols. *4ly*, The embracing of Holiness in its most painful Duties, having seconded all your Resolutions to Reform, by renewing Covenant with God, for putting them in Execution; for from Him is all your Strength and Furniture for managing this Work. *5ly*, The Soul with this Armour, sets out in the Name of the God of Israel, to fight its Goliaths and Spiritual Foes, never to give over, till the Victory be gained.

2ly, I am to Enquire, *What is the Sin that so easily begets us, that must be thus laid aside?* Answer 1. *Original Sin*, that universal Depravation of our Nature, of which the Apostle *Paul* speaks, *Romans 7.* and of the Spirit's Lusting, Debating and Warring against this Body of Death; this made him most humble in the sight of God: Sutable Convictions of this, would advance a Soul's Esteem of the free Grace of God, the Mystery of the Sinfulness of Sin, is never seen, till this original Pravity of our Nature be discovered, *Rom. 7. 13.* There is more Malignity in this, than in all the Sins of our Life; For 1. Actual Sin is but a Violation of one Command of God; but this of all God's Commands at once, a Contrariety to every Part of God's Will; this is forbidden in every Command, for when it prohibits the Effect, it prohibits the Cause. 2. The Law is but sometimes broken by Actual Sin; but this breaks it at all Times, in the Womb and in Infancy, when Actual Sin had no Place; of this Natural Corruption, there is no Interruption from the Soul's Conjunction with the Body, to its Dissolution. 3. This is the Mother Sin, in its Womb all the rest are Formed. 4. 'Tis Habitual, no transient Act nor moveable Disposition, but permanent continuing while the Union twixt the Soul and Body lasts, 'tis an Inhabitant will never flit, till the House be pull'd down: 'Tis also a Habit, in respect of Facility in Acting, it easily begets us, prevails over us, and carries us away with it. 5. 'Tis of universal Extent, having overspread the Whole Man, and seized on every Part, *Rom. 8. 7.* The carnal Mind is Enmity unto God, 'tis not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. *Isa. 1. 6.* From the Sole of the Foot, unto the Head, there is no Soundness, but Wounds and Bruises, and purifying Sores; in the Thoughts it begets Vanity, *Psal. 94. 11.* The Lord knows the Thoughts of Man, that they are Vanity. *Genes. 6. 5.* God saw the wickedness of Man was great; and that every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only Evil continually. In the Understanding, Original Sin begets Blindness, *Ephes. 4. 18.* in the Will, it begets Rebellion; in the Conscience, Searchedness; in the Affections, Carnality; and in Heart, Hardness. 6. This Sin is Monstrous, a Child born without Eyes, Mouth, Hands or Legs, we count a Monster; there is a Defect of these Powers of the Soul, as are Analogical to these Parts in the Body; there is no Eye to see God, Corruption hath put it out, and we are Born blind; no Arms to embrace Christ offered in the Gospel; no Feet to come to Him: Put all these Considerations together, and you may see a Necessity of laying this Corruption of our Nature aside.

A second Evil to be laid aside is, the Effect of this Natural Corruption, whereby it exerts 'tis Efficacy, namely predominant Lusts and Idols, these must be discovered and mortify'd. To this End, I would offer a few Considerations, *First*, That though there be Seeds of all Sin in every Man and Woman; yet there is an Impetuosity in each Person, to some particuler more than others, to some Captain Sin, by which Original Sin exerts its Dominion and Reigning Power in the unconverted, and

Hebrews XII. Vers. 1.

15

its Tyranny for a time in Believers: Hence, *Cain* is branded for his Envy and Malice; *Pharaoh* for his Stubbornness and Hardness of Heart; *Corah* and his Company for their Rebellion; *Judas* for his Covetousness. 3^{ly}, Consider there is a Necessity for discovering and finding out these predominant Idols, these Sins that easily beset us. If it be asked, where shall I find them? Answer 1. Seek these in the Natural Constitution and Temper of your Bodies; there it lyes, that inclines some Men to one Sin more than another. 2. Seek it in the Management of your Calling; most States of Life are liable to a Mystery of Iniquity, as Extortion, Oppression, Covetousness, Deceiving, Over-reaching, false Weights and Measures, taking Advantage of the Ignorance, Weakness or Necessity of the Buyers. 3. Relative Sins are oft-times your Predominate Sins, in a Magistrate, Timorousness, Cowardice, Fear of displeasing great Men, Conniving at Sin; in Ministers Negligence in Preaching, Visiting, Examination and the like Duties; in Parents indulging Children, as *Old Eli*; in Servants, purloining and cheating their Masters. 4. Your Predominant Sins may be found in the various Conditions of your Life; in Prosperity, a Proud, Haughty, Insolent Humor; in Adversity, Discontent, Fretting at God, Repining at Providence. 3^{ly}, VVhen ye have thus made Search, and some discovery, humbly acknowledge your Sins that so easily beset you, before God. If ye further enquire, How shall I know if this Sin be my particular Predominant? Answer 1. 'Tis the Sin you most easily and frequently fall in. 2. That engrosses thy Thoughts more especially in secret Retirements. 3. That thou art frequently Warned of, Checked for, Vows against, and yet recoils again in it. 4. A deliberate Unwillingness to have it discovered and spoke against, 2 Sam. 18. 5. Deal gently with the young Man *Abisalom*. 1 Kings 22. 8. There is one *Micajah* the Son of *Imlah*, by whom we enquire of the Lord; but I hate him, for he doth not Prophecie Good concerning me, but Evil. 5^{ly}, That to which all other Sins are subservient to feed and maintain it, as Waters empty themselves in the Sea, so other Sins into this; that is surely a Predominant Idol. 6. That Sin which thou cannot part with, even on the most Advantageous Terms of the Gospel.

3^{ly}, I proposed to give the Reasons of the Doctrine, Why Sin is thus to be laid aside and mortify'd: And 1. God hath commanded it; and this, tho' there were no more, makes it necessary, *Colos. 3. 5. Mortify your Members that are on the Earth.* *Ezek. 18. 31. Cast away from you all your Transgressions; whereby ye have transgressed.* 2. These Sins as a Disease will kill you, and lay aside your Souls from the Hope of Heaven, if ye lay them not aside. 3. It was our Lord's Errand to the World, to destroy Sin, should that which hath killed Him, live in us! By His Death He killed Sin, and by the Vertues and Merit of His Cross, we must crucify it, *Gal. 6. 14. God forbid that I should Glory, save in the Cross of Christ, by whom the World is crucified to me, and I unto the World.* 4. Our new Nature and Privileges obliges us to lay it aside, we are Debtors to the Spirit and not to the Flesh. 5. There is no Communion with God otherways, He is a God Glorious in Holiness, 1 Joh. 1. 6. If we say we have Fellowship with Him, and walk in Darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; the Reason why ye want Christ's Presence more than 30 days, may be because your filthy Garments are not laid aside. 6. Lay aside Sin, or your Christian Course will be entirely marred, ye cannot run the Race which is set before you.

More particularly, lay aside Predominants that easily beset you; For 1. By these God gets most Dishonour, Religion is Reproached, Mocked and Insulted; as it was for *David's* Sin, in the Matter of *Uriah* and *Bathsheba*, and may be for the like Crimes. 2. Repentance cannot be sincere, unless this be done, *Psal. 18. 23. I was upright before*

fore Him, and I kept my self from mine Iniquity. 3. This will evidence the Truth and Strength of our Love to God, when we can deny Him nothing, but are willing to pluck out a Right Eye, and to cut off a Right Hand, to abandon these Lusts that are so Near and Dear to us, at His Command.

Use 1. If ye design Heaven, see your Necessary Work; would ye *so run as to obtain*, then lay aside every weight, and the Sin so easily begets you.

Use 2. Of Lamentation, that this great Duty is so much neglected, and that by two sorts of Persons; 1. By these who are under the absolute Dominion of Sin; 2. By Believers who come very far short of this great Duty: As to the 1. There be many of this Generation who have evident Signs of their being under Sin's Dominion, writ on their Fore-heads: As 1. These who mock at Sin, at the Promise of Christ's coming to the Great Day, and the Sound of the Trumpet, 2 Pet. 3.4. 2. Who Sin with Pleasure and Greediness, Ephes. 4.19. 3. Who solicit and encourage their own Hearts to Sin, Prov. 7.18. *Woe* 2.21. *Woe* unto them who devise Iniquity, and work Evil upon their Beds, they cover Fields, and take them by violence. 4. Who make Provision for the Lusts of the Flesh, plough Iniquity and sow Wickedness, and take great Pains to satisfy their Lusts. 5. Such as Sin with so high a Hand, as to be above Conviction and Shame, Prov. 30.20. *An adulterous Woman eateth, and wipeeth her Mouth, and saith, I have done no Wickedness*, Jerem. 6.15. Were they ashamed when they committed Abominations? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither did they blush, Jerem. 3.3. *Thou hadst a Whore's Forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.*

Yea, *th*, Some Believers, tho' they be far from the Way of these in whom Sin reigns without controul, yet alas! come far short of this great Duty of laying aside and mortifying Sin; as is too too evident, 1. Because they are for ordinar *Indisposed, Diverted and Distracted in Duties*; when Idols are shut to the Door, the Believer will be at more Leisure to Pray, Read, Meditate and Examine himself, than when in the throng and croud of Lusts, which make the Soul like a City without Walls. 2. An *actual unwillingness to die*, discovers the Power of some Sin not mortify'd; the Believer whose Lusts are laid aside and subdued at Death, is like a ripe Apple, comes freely away at the touch of a Hand. 3. Too oft the Memory of former Idols is not attended with *blushing and shame*, but raises new Desires to Sin, Ezek. 23.19. *She multiply'd her Whoredoms, in calling to mind the Days of her Youth.* 4. Frequently the Christian is not under the felt need of Christ, to save both from Sin and Wrath.

It may be here Native to Enquire, 1. What mays the laying of Sin aside? 2. Whence is it, that Believers who are convicted of the Evil of Sin, come so far short in this Duty of killing it?

As to the First, These things hinder many Men to lay Sin aside, (1.) The vicious Habits of the Mind, in which there is, 1. Ignorance, the God of this World first blinds the Mind, and then sets Men to his Drudge-Work of Sin, they see no Harm, no Poison in it; and therefore instead of turning it out of Doors and laying it aside, they Ca-jol, Indulge and Entertain it as their Friend. 2. Atheism, all Sense of God, of Sin, or of Duty, is blotted out of the Mind; were there solid Impressions of an infinitely Just, Holy and Awful Majesty of God on the Soul, they durst not so affront his Authority, by breaking His Law, entertaining his Enemies, and doing these abominable Things He hates. 3. Inconsiderateness, Sinners commune not with their own Hearts, they Count not the Cost and Charge of Sin, and that it will be Bitterness in the End; To the Godly, Death, Judgment and Eternity are near, and seen at Hand; and therefore they deal with Sin, as if they heard the Last Trumpet, and saw the Throne

to Christians that ye are made of Clay. Ourselves sufferings that would overcome all Powers but Conquest over all their Enemies: We overcome by the Blood of the Lamb. **2dly** Our Lord's Sufferings may also be a powerful Argument to urge you to Mortification, *1 Cor. 9. 14. The Love of Christ constraineth us, because thus saith the Lord, who is died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who died for them and rose again.* Would not thou burn the Spear that pierced him? Had ye seen his Drops of Blood when infused to the Earth, had ye heard him crying, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,* would ye not vowed a Revenge on Sin? Could thou have loved the Soldier and the Spear that pierced him? Thou art the Man, and thy Dullness is the Spear.

3dly *Finally*, Think on your own Death. Rich and Poor are not distinguishable here; yet what's the Business and Labour of most unmortified Souls, but to adorn, pamper and honour their sinful, contemptible, burthenome Flesh? We never live like Christians, till we trample it under Foot, and deal with Sin as if next Moment to die.

4thly Be watchful, this is of notable Use for successfully subduing beloved Lusts; this keeps a Man under continual Sense of Weakness and Impotency, and Need of borrowed Strength; the more a Man fights against Sin, the more will he experience this: *When I am weak, then I am strong.* *2 Cor. 12. 10.* Watch therefore against the Motions of Sin, it makes sudden Sallics like Fire among Flax; watch in order to improve Advantages ye at any time have against Corruptions, whether by Affliction, or some providential Rebuke against any particular Idol. **5thly** Withhold Fuel from that Lust that often prevails, without this thou does nothing. In order to this, (1.) Keep a strict Guard on thy Senses, by these inordinate Affections enter and are kindled, cry, *Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity,* *Psal. 119. 37.* (2.) Look narrowly to your Thoughts; these are the Shop where Sin is forged, if Thoughts get out, call them in, and examine them, as *Elisha* did *Gebezi*, your Heart cannot be serious, *If vain Thoughts lodge within me,* *Jer. 4. 14.* (3.) Flee the Society of such as are sick of the Disease thou dreads most, and art easily infected by; 'tis not good fighting against the Devil in his own Camp. Men bold venturing on this, hath oft brought them off wounded. **6thly** Improve Afflictions for laying aside predominant Sins, by these the Lord takes away Sin, and makes us Partakers of his Holiness; the oftner the Vessel is scoured, the cleaner it is: Hath this been the Fruit of your Personal or Family Afflictions, or the astonishing Judgments of God on the Land, or Place you live in? Can ye with Grief remember your Losses, and yet with no Regret remember your Pride, Prophanity, Propriety and Debauchery? Will ye defame God's Judgments, and proclaim to the World his Design hath miscarried on you, and that ye'll not be healed? Shall the Rod in *Moses* Hand cleave the Rock, and yet in God's Hand cleave none of your Hearts? Must the Lord's Ministers with Grief of Heart go and complain of you, saying, *Thou hast stricken, but they have not grieved, they made their Faces harder than a Rock, this is a Nation, this is a City that says not the Voice of the Lord, this receives no Correction.*

The second Inference in the Text contains the Positive Part of our Duty, *And let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us.*

For understanding this Part of the Text, consider, (1.) That which we are exhorted to, *it is to run a Race.* (2.) The Method how it is proposed, *it is set before us.* (3.) The necessary Adjunct of running, *it is with Patience.*

As to the first, The Duty exhorted to, is, *to run a Race.* Word *Run* here rendered *Race*, is a Strife or Conflict, 'tis used for any Work which there is striving

running to the utmost of a Man's Abilities, as when Men contended for Maſtery and Victory in the Olympic Games. The Apoſtle Paul frequently uſes it, to expreſs the earneſt Endeavour of Miniſters of the Goſpel for the Conversion of Souls, and Edifying of the Church, *Phil. 2. 21. 1 Tim. 6. 12. 2 Tim. 4. 7.* In this Text it doth ſignifie, that our Chriſtian Obedience and Perſeverance is Matter of great Difficulty, whereunto the outmoſt Exerciſe of our Spiritual Strength is required. Our Performance in this Race is compared to running, by this the Obedience of Faith is oft expreſſed, *Pſal. 119. 3. Song 1. 2. Iſa. 40. 30. 1 Cor. 9. 24.* There are two things required to running, 1. Strength. 2. Speed. The firſt in order to it, the ſecond in it: So in our Chriſtian Courſe, 'tis neceſſary we have firſt Strength of Grace, and then be diligent in exerciſing it.

Conſider, 2^{ly}, The Method how this Race is propoſed, *'tis ſet before us.* Our Lord Chriſt hath done this by preparing and deſigning it for us, he hath limited its Bounds, and all its Circumſtances: He hath in the Goſpel given us a full Proſpect of all the Duties and Difficulties in running.

3^{ly}, Conſider the neceſſary Adjunct of running, *'tis with Patience.* This conſiſts in a quiet ſubmiſſive ſuffering of evil things, and waiting for good things to come, with Perſeverance and Continuance; to the Conqueſt of the one, and Enjoyment of the other. From this part of the Text,

Obſerve, 1. *It is the incumbent Duty of Chriſtians to be ſpeedy and progreſſive in advancing in Religion, and the practice of Holineſs.*

Obl. 2. *Great Patience is neceſſary to theſe who would make Progreſs in their Chriſtian Courſe.*

To open the firſt Doctrine, I ſhall, 1. Premiſe a few Words for Explication. 2. Hold out the Reſemblance betwixt Running and our Chriſtian Courſe. 3. Prove the Truth of the Point.

Fiſt, for Explication, Let it be conſidered, that the Words in the Text are purely Figurative; and 'tis obſervable, that the Advance and Progreſs of Saints toward Heaven is ſet out by a Variety of Metaphors, as, 1. By the Light which ſhines more and more to the perfect Day, *Prov. 4. 18.* 2. By the Waters of the Sanctuary, which encreaſed from the Ankle to the Knee, and then to the Loins, and then to an unpaſſable Depth, *Ezek. 47.* 3. By an Edifice that from the Foundation ariſeth higher and higher till it be a compleat Building, *Eph. 2. 21.* 4. By Plants, as Palm-trees and Cedars that grow and advance till they come to their full Height, *Pſal. 92. 12.* 5. By a Body that by Degrees comes to its full Stature, *Eph. 4. 16.* 6. By local Motion, and that under ſeveral Terms, 1. Coming up, *Song. 8. 5.* 2. Walking before the Lord, *Pſal. 116. 9.* 3. By running, *1 Cor. 9. 24.* So run as ye may obtain, and ſo it is expreſſed in the Text: And this leads me,

Secondly, To explain the Reſemblance betwixt our Chriſtian Courſe and running in a Race; And, 1. A Man who runs in a Race muſt take good Care that he begin well, he muſt be exact in firſt ſetting out: So muſt the Chriſtian take heed that he leave and turn his back on the World, and that he early begin, and ſet about this great Affair, *Iſa. 55. 6. Seek the Lord while he may be found. 2 Cor. 6. 2. Now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation. Eccleſ. 12. 1. Remember thy Creator in the days of thy Youth.* 2^{ly}, A runner in a Race muſt know the Way well: Now Chriſtians, thy Lord and Maſter is the Way, and hath paved and conſecrated the Way to Heaven, *John 14. 6. Heb. 10. 19, 20. There is no other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we*

1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8
 9
 10
 11
 12
 13
 14
 15
 16
 17
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26
 27
 28
 29
 30
 31
 32
 33
 34
 35
 36
 37
 38
 39
 40
 41
 42
 43
 44
 45
 46
 47
 48
 49
 50
 51
 52
 53
 54
 55
 56
 57
 58
 59
 60
 61
 62
 63
 64
 65
 66
 67
 68
 69
 70
 71
 72
 73
 74
 75
 76
 77
 78
 79
 80
 81
 82
 83
 84
 85
 86
 87
 88
 89
 90
 91
 92
 93
 94
 95
 96
 97
 98
 99
 100
 101
 102
 103
 104
 105
 106
 107
 108
 109
 110
 111
 112
 113
 114
 115
 116
 117
 118
 119
 120
 121
 122
 123
 124
 125
 126
 127
 128
 129
 130
 131
 132
 133
 134
 135
 136
 137
 138
 139
 140
 141
 142
 143
 144
 145
 146
 147
 148
 149
 150
 151
 152
 153
 154
 155
 156
 157
 158
 159
 160
 161
 162
 163
 164
 165
 166
 167
 168
 169
 170
 171
 172
 173
 174
 175
 176
 177
 178
 179
 180
 181
 182
 183
 184
 185
 186
 187
 188
 189
 190
 191
 192
 193
 194
 195
 196
 197
 198
 199
 200
 201
 202
 203
 204
 205
 206
 207
 208
 209
 210
 211
 212
 213
 214
 215
 216
 217
 218
 219
 220
 221
 222
 223
 224
 225
 226
 227
 228
 229
 230
 231
 232
 233
 234
 235
 236
 237
 238
 239
 240
 241
 242
 243
 244
 245
 246
 247
 248
 249
 250
 251
 252
 253
 254
 255
 256
 257
 258
 259
 260
 261
 262
 263
 264
 265
 266
 267
 268
 269
 270
 271
 272
 273
 274
 275
 276
 277
 278
 279
 280
 281
 282
 283
 284
 285
 286
 287
 288
 289
 290
 291
 292
 293
 294
 295
 296
 297
 298
 299
 300
 301
 302
 303
 304
 305
 306
 307
 308
 309
 310
 311
 312
 313
 314
 315
 316
 317
 318
 319
 320
 321
 322
 323
 324
 325
 326
 327
 328
 329
 330
 331
 332
 333
 334
 335
 336
 337
 338
 339
 340
 341
 342
 343
 344
 345
 346
 347
 348
 349
 350
 351
 352
 353
 354
 355
 356
 357
 358
 359
 360
 361
 362
 363
 364
 365
 366
 367
 368
 369
 370
 371
 372
 373
 374
 375
 376
 377
 378
 379
 380
 381
 382
 383
 384
 385
 386
 387
 388
 389
 390
 391
 392
 393
 394
 395
 396
 397
 398
 399
 400
 401
 402
 403
 404
 405
 406
 407
 408
 409
 410
 411
 412
 413
 414
 415
 416
 417
 418
 419
 420
 421
 422
 423
 424
 425
 426
 427
 428
 429
 430
 431
 432
 433
 434
 435
 436
 437
 438
 439
 440
 441
 442
 443
 444
 445
 446
 447
 448
 449
 450
 451
 452
 453
 454
 455
 456
 457
 458
 459
 460
 461
 462
 463
 464
 465
 466
 467
 468
 469
 470
 471
 472
 473
 474
 475
 476
 477
 478
 479
 480
 481
 482
 483
 484
 485
 486
 487
 488
 489
 490
 491
 492
 493
 494
 495
 496
 497
 498
 499
 500
 501
 502
 503
 504
 505
 506
 507
 508
 509
 510
 511
 512
 513
 514
 515
 516
 517
 518
 519
 520
 521
 522
 523
 524
 525

DATE 2-12-71 BY 212-116-10

Fourthly, A Runner must beware of being overcharged by Eats in eating and drinking: So a Christian who strives for the Reward must be temperate in all things, 1st Cor. 9. 4. *Take heed to your selves, lest on any wise your Liberty be spoiled with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and Care of this Life.* 5th, A Runner must not lessen his Pace, but run swiftly and constantly: So a Believer must be swift of Foot, not as the Galatians, Chap. 5. 7. *Ye did run well, who did hinder you, but as the Apostle saith, the Race is not to the swift,* Chap. 6. *It must first be with Diligence made full Assurance of Faith unto the end*

6b, A Runner must be strong, healthy, of a good Habit of Body: So must a Spiritual Soldier *Be Strong in the Lord, Eph. 6, 10.* Strong in the Grace that is in Jesus Christ, endeavouring to be free of these Soul-weakening Distempers of Unbelief, Formality, Deadness, Hardness of Heart, and Backsliding. 7b, Runners meet sometimes with Diff. Way in their Race, which hinders the Loss of the Prize: A Believer must also contend with Opposition from carnal Reason, a wicked World, a tempting Devil, persecuting Adversaries, and at length pass through the valley and shadow of Death.

97. Runners have many Spectators: So God and Angels, Men and Devils behold how a Christian engages himself in this Race. 98. There is a glorious Prize you run for: No less than a *Crown of Glory*, an *Imperishable and undefiled*, which fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you. Run therefore so, as ye run upon good ground by faith the Apostle Paul, 1 Tim. 6. 7, 8. *I have finished my Course, henceforth I stand to receive the Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give to me at that day, and not to me only, but with all them that love his appearing.* 109. The Man who firmly designs the Prize, must break through all Difficulties and Allurements, he regards not Satans golden Apples, thrown to divert him in the Way, he knows it is in vain to begin, if he do not end it, he looks to the glorious *Apollonius*, the Lord Jesus, the Judge and Rewarder, and presses to the *Finish* for the Prize of his high Calling, Phil. 3. 14. If ye so run, ye shall in the end be overcomers, and sit down with Christ on his Throne.

Thirdly, I am to prove the Doctrine, that this is your Duty to run the Race, to make Progress in Religion and the Practice of Holiness. And 'tis evident, First, From the many Promises God hath made for his Peoples Encouragement in this Duty, and dreadful Threatenings to them that withdraw from it. How precious are these Bundles of Promises which we have, *IJa. 40. 31. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their Strength, they shall run and not weary, and they shall walk and not faint.* *Isa. 54. 1. I will be*

In the first place, we shall observe the Duty that God hath laid upon his People in general; viz. Brethren, Run Swiftly, and follow hard after the Grace of God. How terrible will be their Threats against such as drag back from winning this Race. Heb. 10. 38. If any Man draw back, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him. Luke 9. 62. No Man having put his hand to the Plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God. 2y. The Union which Believers have with Christ, their Heads, should oblige you to make Progress in your Christian Course, for 'tis the Design of this Union to grow up in him in all things. Eph. 4. 15. Gal. 2. 20. I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God. 3y. God hath appointed many Means to forward his People in their Christian Course; at this End he hath appointed Ministers and publick Ordinances; 1 Pet. 2. 2. Eph. 4. 11. 12. 13. For the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we all attain unto Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto the perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ. To this end hath he appointed private Duties, i.e. Reading, Prayer, Meditation, and Self-examination; and to this end hath he promised his inward warm breathing Influence of the Spirit of God, to quicken and revive our Souls: Having therefore such noble Means, who shall be highly accountable if we improve them not, in order to make progress in Holiness. 4y. By diligently running this Christian Race, we shall improve the noble Privilege God hath bestowed upon us, and shall be made meet for Glory; the weaker are, the sooner shall the Sickle be put in, to cut you down for enjoying it with other heavenly Blessings; Therefore strive, so ye may obtain the Crown of the Kingdom of Heaven. 1 Cor. 9. 24.

Life 3. Of Advancing. Are we compassed with such a Cloud of Witnesses, then let us run this Race, *fill not your Pace, but be still upon the Advance*, till ye arrive at Glory. To enforce this, consider, 1. Advance and Progress in Grace is the best Evidence of strict Truth and Reality; things which have no Life will never grow. 2. This is the Beauty of affluence; the more the Child advances, the more it comes to Beauty and Completeness, looks white and ruddy. 3. So much as you advance in Holiness, so much Glory will you bring to your gracious God, *John 15. 8. He that abides in me, and I in him, he that brings forth much Fruit.* 4. If ye be not running and advancing in the Ways of God, this is a sufficient Evidence that ye are decaying and declining.

Use of Language, that there are so few who make Progress in the Christian Race, the greater Part of Professors have only a Form of Religion; grow in Habits, but not in Fruit. Yea, alas, among weak Christians there is little Growth, for, 1. Many have lost their Spiritual Appetite; they want Hunger and Thirst for Ordinances, Duties, they came like a hungry Man to a Feast, but now their full Soul loathes the Honey Comb. O sad Prophecy! 2. Many are turned of a worldly Frame of Spirit once they began to favour the wings above, to speak Cantab's Language, but now that Frame is quite gone. 3. Many are little troubled for Sin, but connive overlook, and allow it to dwell in their Hearts.

1. *Upright Heart* - Make Trial if ye be doubting in this Race; try it by these Evidences, & As ye go beyond former Measures of Grace, 'tis a Sign a Child thrives when he outgrows his Clothes. So when that Measure of Faith, Love, Knowledge, and other Graces, that satisfied you once will not serve now, but ye daily press for more, 'tis a good Sign.
 2. *When more fully rooted in Religion*, the spreading of the Roots of a Tree is an Evidence of its Growth. Try therefore if ye be rooted and built up in Christ, and settled in the Faith, Confession, &c.
 3. *When the Frame of the Heart is more spiritual in the Principles*

Principles of Love to Christ and fellow Christians, in the Afflictions relating the first risings of Corruption, and in the Performance of Duties, adding the Fire of holy Zeal to the Sacrifice, Rom. 12. 11. *Present in Spirit serving the Lord*, this will be a good Evidence of your advancing in your Christian Course.

Use 4. Of Direction. If ye would advance in your Christian Race, 1. *Exercife your selves unto Godliness*, 1 Tim. 4. 7. As the Body grows stronger by Exercise, so will the Habits of Grace in the Soul. 2. *Be humble*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. Be clothed with Humility, for *God resists the Proud, but gives Grace to the Humble*, the best Grapes grow upon the lowest Vines. 3. *Be much in Prayer for the Lords Assistance*, who can enable you to run this Race by the Influence of his Spirit, by his Word, by merciful Providences, yea sometimes by Crosses, Heb. 12. 10. He chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his Holiness.

I come to the last Doctrine from this Text, viz. *This great Patience is necessary to those who would make progress in their Christian Course.*

To open this Point, I shall, *First*, Explain the Nature of this Grace of Patience; *Secondly*, Show upon what Account its necessary in our Christian Race.

As to the *First*, This Grace of Patience consists in a quiet submissive suffering of evil Things, and waiting for good Things to come, with Perseverance and Continuance to the Conquest of the one, and Enjoyment of the other.

More particularly, this supposeth, that the Race is long and tedious, tho' our life be but an Hand-breadth, yet in it we have a wearisome Wilderness to pass. 'Tis true some arrive sooner at *Canaan* than others, yet to Believers who have the firm Hope of Heaven, every Hour seems a Day, every Day a Month, every Month a Year; hence such sweet Soul-breathings, *O that I had Wings like a Dove, that I might see better*. Saints will meet with Difficulties in this Way, with respect to which Patience must be exercised. This leads me—

Secondly, To shew upon what Accounts the Exercise of this Grace of Patience is so necessary. And, *First*, Upon the Account of Reproaches a Profession of Religion will expose us to, it hath done, and will do so while the World lasts, for so long will Satan be the Accuser of the Brethren, in their Straits and Difficulties, he will tell them, where is now thy God gone, in this Condition Reproach may break their Heart, *Psal. 69. 20.* But Patience holds up and supports the Soul, by leading us to commit our Cause to God after our Lords Example, 1 Pet. 2. 23. By directing us patiently to wait till the Lord arise and plead our Cause, with *Micah 7. 9, 10.* *I will bear the Indignation of the Lord; because I have sinned against him; until he plead my Cause, he will bring me forth to the Light; and I shall behold his Righteousness.* Patience also supports the Soul, by Testimony of its own Sincerity, 1 Cor. 4. 9. *For I know nothing by my self; yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* *Secondly*, Patience is necessary under Violence and Persecution which Believers are exposed to; these are very sore Trials, 1. By Reason of their Violence and Extremity, like a Storm beating down all before it, such Storms were the Persecutions of the Primitive Christians, and at this Day in many Places under the *Papal Power*. 2. By their long Duration and Continuance, waiting, vexing, consuming, and like to wear out the Saints of the most High! But under all these Pressures, Patience bears up the Soul, 1. By keeping and preserving the Soul from disturbed Affections, Passions of Anger, worldly Sorrow, carnal Fears, and inordinate Love to present things, hereby in *Patience we possess our Souls*, Luke 21. 19. 2. By enabling us to take a sedate prospect of eternal Things, and their glorious Excellencies beyond what we suffer, 2 Cor. 4. 17. *Our light Afflictions that are for a Moment,*

Hebrews XII. Verse 2.

Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith; who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God.

Patience is necessary in waiting for the Accomplishment of many and great Promises concerning the Kingdom of Christ, and Interest of the Gospel in this World, especially what concerns the Tranquillity and Extent thereof, as yet undisturbed till which time there are many Outrages committed against the Reign and Interest of Christ during this time; *We are to keep the Word of Commandment, Rev. 1. 10: which will produce these Effects.*

1. A quiet Resignation of all Things and Seasons to the Sovereignty of God.
2. A due Valuation of present Enjoyments, especially of Gospel Mercies we enjoy this Day.
3. A ready Application of Mind to present Duty.
4. Waiting upon God by Prayer for the accomplishing of what we have not received, but is contained in the Promise.

Fourthly, Patience is necessary with respect to our personal Obedience. These things Believers principally aim at in this World.

1. That their Corruptions may be subdued and mortified.
2. That Graces may be quickened and strengthened.
3. That Temptations being removed, their Spiritual Consolations may abound.

These things they still long for, but when they find new Storms rising, they are ready to faint, were it not the Grace of Patience supports them. Since then this noble Grace is so very useful to a Christian in this World, *Be ye not slack, but followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises, Heb. 6. 12.*

HEBREWS XII. Verse 2.

Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith; who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God.

IN the preceding Verse the Apostle had proposed the Example of the Cloud of Witnesses, who had and professed the same Faith with our selves; Now he ascends higher, and proposes him who is the Author and Finisher of that Faith in us all; he proposes his Person in the first place as the Object of our Faith, from him we may expect Aid and Assistance for Conformity to himself, as that wherein he is proposed as our Example. The Words contain the approved Manner of running our Christian Course, *Let us run, how? Looking unto Jesus.*

Where, *First*, A Duty so full of Divine Pleasure and Profit, that it will sweeten the whole Course of our Obedience, *Looking to Jesus*; in all we do we are to keep our Eye close on him.

1. By his Name *Jesus*, where is infinite Treasure.
2. By his Office or Work, *The Author and Finisher of our Faith*.
3. By his Summary of what our Saviour did undergo for us, *He endured the Cross, despising the Shame*.
4. The Ground or Reason moving him thus to suffer for us.

propounded for our Encouragement and Example, For the Joy that was in before him.
The fulfilling of this foreseen Joy, He is set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God.

I shall at this time explain this Soul-ravishing and refreshful Duty proposed for our successful Management of our Christian Course, *looking unto Jesus*. This being expressed in the present Tense, a continued Act is intended, i. e. In all we do in our Profession and Obedience we are constantly to be looking unto Christ. *Looking* in Scripture which it relates to God or Christ, denotes an Act of Faith or Trust with Hope and Expectation, it is not a meer Act of the Understanding in considering what we look upon; but it is an Act of the whole Soul in Faith, Trust and Confidence. So it is to be understood, *Zeck. 12. 10. Isa. 45. 22. Psa. 34. 5.* Thus our Lord Jesus is in this Text propounded to us, not as a meer Example for Imitation, but also as the Object in whom we place our Faith and Trust with Expectation of Success in our Christian Course. The Emphasis of the Original Word *anawwe*; our Language doth not fully express, for it signifies, *the averting the Eye off one Object, and setting it upon another.* A looking off things that may be discouraging to us, as the cross Opposition, Persecution, and evil Example of Apostates: Nothing will draw our Minds from discouraging Views of these things, but Faith and Trust in Christ, looking to him with Expectation of Aid and Assistance. 2^d. In this Text we have the great Object to whom we are to look proposed to us. 1. By his Name *Jesus*. 2^d. By his Office and Work, *The Author and Finisher of our Faith*. As to the *First*, This Name *Jesus*, the true one Word, yet the most comprehensive one in the World, letting out the Offices, Natures, Qualities, Excellencies and Perfections of Christ: In whom are all the Powders of the Merchant, he is all, and in all, O what Variety in *Jesus*? 'Tis not wearisome to view him, but goes down like the best Wine, that makes the Lips of them that are asleep to speak. What ravishing and Soul-alluring Attractives shall we see here to invite us, to summon our Eyes off all other things, and set them alone upon Christ? To look to his Person as the Object of our Faith, and to imitate his Example in our Christian Race, as better and higher than that of the Cloud of Witnesses, *vers. 1.*

This *Jesus* is next propounded in his honourable Title, *The Author and Finisher of our Faith*: Where consider, 1. A glorious rich Grace, Faith, which is to be understood not of the Doctrine, but of the Grace of Faith, this being the Souls Eye to look on *Jesus*, *Zeck. 12. 10.* 2^d. Consider Christ's Denomination with reference to this Grace, *He is the Author and Finisher of it*; he first begins and forms it in the Soul, and thereafter preserves and brings it to Perfection. From this part of the Text already Explained,

Observe, 1. That none can expect a clear View of precious Christ, till their Eyes be taken off other things, which tend to blind them, and veil his Excellency.

Obf. 2. That looking to *Jesus* is the best Expedient, for carrying us over all Difficulties in our Christian Course.

Obf. 3. He who successfully and conscientiously imitates Christ's Example, shall successfully finish his Christian Race.

Obf. 4. That our Lord *Jesus Christ* is the Worker, Carrier on, and Perfector of Faith in his People.

I return to Observe, first, That whosoever doth desire or expect a clear View of precious Christ, must take their Eyes off other things, which tend to blind and veil his Excellency, *Itai. 17. 7, 8.* In that Day shall a Man look to his Maker, and his Eyes shall have respect to

Hebrews XII. Verse 2.

the Holy One of Israel; and he shall not look to the Altar, the work of his hands, neither shall he respect them which his fingers have made, the Golden Altar, or the Table of Propitiation, for they are not as things which are seen. The Lord gave Lot a Charge, *Look not behind thee.* Gen. 13. 13. We shall

I shall further consider, *First*, What things we are to look off. *2d*, Why it is necessary to look off these things.

First, The things we are to look off are, *First*, Some things crossful, heavy and discouraging. *2d*, Other things pleasing and profitable in the World, *Sing* 4. 8. *Look from the top of Amanas, from the top of Seaim and Hermon.*

First, Look off Crosses, Afflictions and Tryals with which the People of God are oft attended, but be not discouraged; for, 1. If need be for a time, these are his Peoples School for correcting their Irregularities, they come as Performance of Covenant Promises, and this shall be the sweet Fruit of them to purge away Sin; hence they tune them over to a Song of Praise, *It is good for me that I was Afflicted*, *Psal.* 119. 71. *2d*, Look off Persecutions, if ye design the Kingdom of Heaven, ye are fairly warned, it is through many Tribulations; but be of good Cheer, if ye suffer it is with Christ, who will bear the great Dint of what his Members suffer, *Acts* 9. 5. *In all our Afflictions, he is afflicted*, *Isa.* 63. 9. *If ye suffer with him, ye shall also reign with him.* *3d*, Look off Reproaches and Scoffs from the irreligious World, who will be ready in your Distresses to cast up to you, *Where is thy God?* This hath been the usual Lot of God's People, it is an old Complaint, *Reproach hath broke my Heart.* *4d*, Look off the evil Example of Apostates, Men whose Heart is not tight with God, cannot stand their Ground when a Storm blows in their Face; they are at, *this evil is of the Lord, why wait on him any longer, Curse God and die.*

Secondly, Look off things in the World that seem alluring Baits, as Pleasures, Honours and Riches: Christ will never get a hearty Look from thee, till thou look off these; therefore look, 1. From the *Amanas* and *Hermons* of the World's sinful Pleasures, lest thou prove Sensual, not having the Spirit; it is impossible to take Christ and Pleasures in at one Look; *They who take the Timbrel and Harp, and reject at the Sound of the Organ, they say unto God, Depart from us, we desire not the Knowledge of thy Way.* *Job* 21. 12, 14. *2d*, Look off the sinful Profits of the World, these veil the Beauty of Jesus, and the Gain of Godliness, *The Friendship of the World is Enmity with God.* *James* 4. 4. *He that loveth the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* *1 John* 2. 15. An Heart set on the World goes a Whoring from God. Therefore in Scripture Pharaoh is called *Adultery*; what wonder when the you take God in Christ for your Covetanted Husband, yet your covetous Heart is married to the World, and commits Adultery with it, by having the Carry of your Heart and Affections toward it; natively it is exalted in your Eye and Esteem, *Psal.* 4. 6. *Who will shew us any good? By the Heart's being fixedly set upon it, the Heart is Christ's due.* *Prov.* 23. 6. *My Son give me thy Heart;* it should be Chast and Loyal to him, the Woman who is not content with one Husband must be an Harlot; and to be short, Adultery is committed with the World by giving it Christ's Room, voting Christ off the Throne to give it the Preference. O wretched Earth Worms, who give that Pains, Love, Time, Care, and Earnestness to the World that's due to Christ! This is to act as professed Prostitutes, and ye may have this Motto writ on your foreheads at last, *Psal.* 52. 7. *Lo this is the Man that made not God his Strength, but trusted in the abundance of his Riches, and strengthened himself in his Wickedness.* *3d*, Look off the World's sinful Honours, to seem Great, to be had in high Esteem, to be bowed and cringed to by others, what's this even when obtained,

observed, but the Breath of a few Men's Mouths that alters on every light Occasion, and renders him looking in the lovely Jesus. *Not many Words are called.*

Secondly, I am to shew why it is necessary to look on these things; and, 1. They will put Christ and us in the best light, how can Heaven and Earth come in one Thought? *To cannot serve God and Mammon, Matth. 6. 24.* 2ly, So long as we continue looking on these, they obscure and hide Christ's transcendent Amableness. 3ly, All things beside Christ are not worth a Look, he who looks aight to Jesus, can say, *I count all things loss, for the excellency of the Knowledge of Jesus my Lord, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, Phil. 3. 8.* 4ly, We are matched to Christ, and the Law of Marriage obliges us to leave all other things, and cleave and look to him alone, *Psalm. 49. 10. Forget things own People, and thy Fathers House.* 5ly, Our Lord is Jealous, and Jealousie is a Passion will endure no Corival in share of Love. 6ly, All other things, tho' enjoyed could not satisfie, *Ecc. 1. 8. The Eye is not satisfied with seeing; it may be wearied with looking on divers Objects, and yet desires new Objects still; but one Look of the blessed Jesus will terminate the Souls utmost desires, when ye behold King Solomon with the Crown on his Head, then you will cry, When have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth I desire beside thee.*

Use 1. *Of Information.* Here we have a Swatch of our depraved natural Disposition, our Look and Eye is quite off Jesus, and set upon other things either directly opposite to, or that eminently tend to obscure his matchless Loveliness and Beauty. What need have we to Pray with David, *Psalm. 119. 18. Open mine Eyes, that I may see the Wonders in thy Law;* and with penitent Ephraim, *Jer. 31. 18. Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God.*

Use 2. *For Conviction and Reproof* to such whose Disposition this is to have their Heart and Eye set on other things, and not on lovely Jesus. I drop for your Conviction these few Considerations, 1. What small account all other things come to in God's Account; all are but Vanity, having but a meer imaginary Being; what a foolish unreasonable thing is it to set thy Heart upon that which is not. 2ly, Man clothed with Riches, Honour, and Pleasures, is a fair but a fading Flower, a bright Glass, but brittle, *Psalm. 39. 5. Every Man as his best estate is altogether Vanity.* 3ly, Consider what disproportion betwixt Jesus and all these other things, if weighed in the Ballance and compared together; Is it thy Practice to equal, yea prefer a Feather to a Mountain of Gold? 4ly, What Ungratitude, Madness and Folly is wrapt up in thy looking upon other things, and not upon Jesus; thou won't look off the Serpent that stung thee, the Poison that will kill thee for Jesus, who for thee looked off Heaven and Glory, and made himself of no Reputation; *He for your sakes became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.* 5ly, How do ye degrade your immortal Soul that's of a more noble Extract and high Progeny, than to live on such Husks, breathe in so gross and foul an Air, raking the Dunghill with that Soul which is of the same Nature with Angels, and made to converse with the glorious Majesty of God. 6ly, Consider thy handbreadth of Time, and thy great Work to be exped in it; and wilt thou spend this little now either in doing nothing, or in doing worse; sweating to gather Fagots to burn thy Soul to Eternity!

Use 3. *Of Direction.* If it be asked, What shall I do to get mine Eyes to look off these other things which veil Christ's Excellency? Answer, First, Set about fervent Prayer, crying, *Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity, incline mine Heart to thy Testimonies, not in Covetousness, Psalm. 119. 36, 37.* 2ly, *Ascend Pisgah, view the Land* of

Hebrews XII. Vers. 2.

39

of Glory, keep thy Heart and Eye following thy Look; would a wise Merchant leave his Shop in the throng of a Market-day, when he may have great Gain, and join to Children on the Street pursuing Flies? The Motto of the heavenly Spirit says Christians is, *Non vacat Brigat*—I have no Leisure for Trifles: How doth he constrain and vitiate these? *Eccles. 2. 2. I said of Labour it is mad, and of Idleness what doth it;* he laughs at the Formalities of the World, had we Heavens sweet Taste always on the Soul, we would soon spit out Earth's blandishing Bait, as a Man would do Gall after tasting Honey. 3y, Reckon thy self a Stranger on this Earth; will a Traveller in a foreign Place sit down and build a stately Palace, Orchard and Gardens, where he is not to stay but for a Winter Season? *They of whom the World was not worthy minded in Despair.* Heb. 11. 37. will not you follow the footsteps of the Flock? 4y, Get more familiar Intimacy with precious Jesus, and this will blacken the passing Glories of time, and make them appear but as *Dross* and *Dung*, *Phil. 3. 8.* 5y, Free your selves of a Crowd of Earthly Concerns, have as little to do with sinful Pleasures, Profits and Honours of a World as possible; if ye let your Heart cleave to them, there is no Cure, but either Repentance or Hell must part you and them. 6y, Dwell much on the vanity of the Creature, *Eccles. 1. 2.* Men look through false Glasses on these things, and therefore they so admire them; but if the veil be put off, and these created Enjoyments let in their Nakedness, O how empty, passing, perishing Shadows! Observe, 2. *Looking to Jesus is the best Expedient for carrying us over all Difficulties, in our Christian Course.*

There be many Weights and beloved Sins whereby we are invironed, but one saving Look of lovely Jesus carry all these out of sight, and sets us beyond them. Let all Pleasures, Profits, Honours, sinful or lawful Satisfactions on Earth, be set out in their most splendid Colours, yet one saving View of the blessed Jesus in the Believers Eye will infinitely outvye them; He looks over, above and beyond them to his well beloved, who carries alone the Crown and Glory, *Psal. 73. 25. Philip. 3. 8.* The richest Attractives are in him, were ever heard of, which when discovered, thou'lt never take thine Eyes off again, but run away looking to Jesus.

To prepare this Doctrine for our Use, I shall, *First*, Shew wherein consists the Nature of this looking. 2y, What it is in Christ we are to look upon. 3y, Give some Reasons why we are thus to look on him.

As to the first, The Nature of this looking, Negatively, it consists not in looking with the Eyes of the Body. Sweet and lovely Jesus is now beyond this as to us while we are in the World; *For the Heavens must receive him until the time of the Resurrection of all things.* I doubt not but there shall be Use for an ocular Vision in Heaven, *Job 19. 27. There we shall see him Face to Face,* 1 Cor. 13. 12. but until that time we must walk by Faith, and not by Sight, 2 Cor. 5. 7. But Positively, This looking is an inward mental Vision, *Ephes. 1. 18. The Eyes of our Understanding being enlighten'd.* There are more excellent things to be seen by the Eye of the Mind, than by the bodily Eye, *Heb. 11. 27. Moses endured as seeing of him who is invisible.* The Eye of the Mind penetrates the Worth and Use of the thing looked on: And this kind of Look is either, 1. *Speculative and Theoretical*, which lies in the light of the Understanding, with Knowledge of Spiritual and Heavenly Mysteries; Or, 2y, *Practical*, which affects the Soul with the Sight, and is operative, to produce noble Effects, as engaging the Soul to desire, love, believe, imitate and rejoice in Christ. This Look hath three Experiences, 1. *It is mournful,* *Zech. 12. 10. They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they*

Look on us. 3ly. It is a greedy Look, like these who were smitten with fiery Serpents, when they looked to the brazen Serpent for a Cure: So the Believer looks for Freedom from Sin and Wrath upon the Account of Christ Crucified, John 3. 15, 16. 3ly. It is a resolute Look, *Mica 7. 7. Therefore will I look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my Salvation, my God will bear me.* 4ly. It is a straight Look, *Prov. 4. 25. Let thine Eyes look right on, and thine Eye-lids straight before thee, without a squint Eye, or secret Reserve for Lusts and Idols.* 5ly. A Look attended with Joy, Admiration and Love to the blessed Jesus, John 1. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World.* 6ly. A Look whereby the Soul expects good from God on Christ's Account, 2 Chron. 20. 12.

Secondly, I am to shew what it is in Christ we are thus to look upon: And, *First*, Look to the Person of Jesus, a God dwelling in our Nature, John 1. 14. *The Word was made Flesh;* the wonderful Union and Perfection of the Divine Nature in Christ renders him an Object of Admiration to Angels and Men, 1 Tim. 3. 16. *Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, and received up into Glory.* What a wonder is it that he should pass by the more noble Nature of Angels, tho' even to assume that had been great Condescension, and take on him our Nature after the Fall, after it had been defiled by Sin, tho' the individual Nature Christ assumed was free from Sin! That he should not personate but assume our Nature to a Personal Union with himself, and that not for a Day, but for ever! That he should be born of a Mother, and yet elder than his Mother! Born of his Mother, and yet the Creator of his Mother! Born of a sinful Woman, and yet free of Sin! Conceived by the Power of the Holy Ghost, and yet not the Son of the Holy Ghost! That he should be born not at home, but abroad! Not in his Mothers House, but in a common Inn! Not in the Guest-Chamber, but in the Stable! That he who is clothed with Glory and Majesty, should be wrapt in Clouts! That he who upholds Heaven and Earth, should be laid in a Horse Crib! That he should not be born of the Grandees of the World, but of a mean Person! That he whom the Heavens adored, should be trode on by miserable Earth Worms! And to be short, that in our Nature he should dispense all good things, be Worshipped by Men and Angels, Judge the World at the great Day, and Reign in Glory for ever! What a Complication of Wonders is here, which may take up all the Saints and Household of God in Admiration and Wonder to Eternity! 2ly. Consider that fullness of Spirit above measure given to him, John 3. 34. *Psal. 45. 7. God hath anointed him with the Oil of Gladness above his fellows;* when a small measure of Grace makes Believers so sweet, as perfumed with all the Powders of the Merchant, Song 3. 5. What must the riches and fullness of the Spirit of Grace filling Jesus Christ above measure, and from him communicable to all his Saints, make him in the Eyes of Believers?

Thirdly, Look on Jesus in his Offices, 1. How suitable are they to the Miseries and Wants of Man? If this be thought upon, we cannot but admire Divine Wisdom draughted in them. We by Nature are blind, He is the Light to lighten the Gentiles, Luke 2. 32. He is the Day-Spring from on High, who hath visited us, to give Light to them that sit in Darkness, and in the shadow of Death, Luke 1. 78, 79. We are in a state of Enmity to God, Christ comes in as an atoning Sacrifice, making peace by the blood of his Cross, Col. 1. 20. We are in Bondage and Captivity to Satan, King Jesus comes to take away the Captives of the Mighty, and deliver the Prey of the Terrible, Isa. 49. 24.

2ly. Look on their compleat Fulness, whereby he is able to save to the uttermost all that come

Hebrews XII. Verse 2.

31

some unto God by him, Heb. 7. 25. 35, Look on the wonderfully excellent Nature of these Offices; the blessed Jesus came down from Heaven to Earth, that as a Prophet he might teach us poor ignorant Scholars, and hath left us many noble Lessons in his Sermons delivered by his own Mouth, recorded by the *Evangelists*: He teaches us also by his Ordinances of Word and Sacraments, by the Ministers of the Gospel, preaching publickly, and from House to House, by the Dispensations of his Providences, and by the Influences of his Spirit, making outward teaching effectual for our Salvation; in all which if ye refuse to hearken, ye shall be destroyed, *Acts* 3. 22, 23. Look on him as a Priest satisfying Justice, by the Death of himself he satisfies his own Divine Justice; he is Priest, Altar and sacrifice in one Person, his Humane Nature is the Sacrifice, his Divine Nature the Altar that Sacrifices the Gift, and he himself willingly offered himself, *Heb.* 10. 7, 10. and by his Intercession he makes his whole Purchase effectual for all the Elect for whom it was designed. Look on him as a King, yea the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who reigns over Angels, obliging them to Worship him; to sing his Praise and run his Errands; over Devils, he keeps them in Chains, he restrains them from tempting his Saints, and orders their Temptations for good: Over the greatest Kings of the Earth, they are but his silly Vassals, he restrains their Wrath, bridles their Power, sets them up, throws them down, and judges them at the great Day: And finally he reigns in the Hearts of his own People, setting up a Throne of Grace in their Souls, killing their Lusts, pacifying their Consciences, conquering their Enemies, feasting them with his Delicacies, preparing the Kingdom of Glory for them, bringing them to it, and reigning with them for evermore: And yet notwithstanding of this matchless Pomp and Power, how was he for our sakes tread upon by poor Mortals, despised and reproached by the basest of his own Creatures! 47, Look how unspeakably comfortable these Offices be to poor Sinners, if Light be pleasant to the Eyes, what must the Sun of Righteousness be? If Pardon be sweet to a condemned Malefactor, what is the Blood of Jesus to a trembling Conscience of a sinner condemned by the Law? If Redemption from Turkish Slavery be desirable, is not the Redemption purchased by Christ from Sin and Satan more rejoicing? All the Promises of the Covenant flow out of these Offices, from the *Prophetical Office* flow Promises of Illumination, Counsel, and Direction: From the *Priestly Office*, Promises of Reconciliation, Peace, Pardon and Acceptance: And from the *Kingly Office*, Promises of converting, encreasing, defending and supporting Grace.

Fourthly, Look to Jesus in the noble relation of a Saviour, imported in the very Name Jesus, *Matth.* 1. 21. *Thou shalt call his Name JESUS, for he shall save his People from their Sins.* It cannot well be told what a matchless, non-such Saviour he is! He saves from all Evil; of him it is written, *Isa.* 61. 1. *The Lord hath anointed me to preach good Tidings to the Meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Prison Doors to them that are bound. He saves from the Guilt of Sin,* *Eph.* 1. 7. *From its Filth,* *Tit.* 2. 14. *From its Dominion,* *Rom.* 6. 14. *From Satan and Death,* *Heb.* 2. 14. *From Hell and the Grave, and Wrath to come,* *1 Cor.* 15. 54, 56, 57. *1 Thes.* 1. 10. *He redeems great Numbers of Sinners out of every Kindred, Tongue, People and Nation,* *Rev.* 5. 9. *He redeems not with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, but with his own precious Blood,* *1 Pet.* 1. 18, 19. And he saves us in an excellent Manner freely, according to the riches of his Grace, *Eph.* 1. 7. Fully, *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,* *Rom.* 8. 1. Seasonably, *Gal.* 4. 4. Cheapfully, *Psal.* 40. 8. and Perfectly, *Heb.* 5. 9. *Believers are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation,* *1 Pet.* 1. 3.

Fifthly,

Sermons upon

Firstly, Look to *Jesus* in the sweet Relation of a Husband, this Marriage Relation is begun in the wooing-Motions betwixt him and the Saints here on Earth, and consummate in Glory. To quicken thy Thoughts in looking on him in this Relation, notice, *What a deformed, ugly and unworthy Bride he matches with, as black as the Devil can make her, carrying the very hue of Hell; yet he Betracheth her in Righteousness, in loving Kindness, and tender Mercies, Hos. 2. 14. When thou was in the Blood, he said unto thee, Love: Thy time was a time of Love, I swore unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine, Ezek. 16. 6. 8.* may not this engage thee to look to him again and again with Love and Delight? *2ly,* Tho' he expect nothing from us, yet he bestows himself and all that he hath upon us, *He for your sakes became poor, that ye through his Poverty may be rich. 3ly,* No Husband ever loved the Wife of his Bosom as lovely *Jesus* doth Believers, he loved his Church, and gave himself for it. *4ly,* No Husband bears with so many Provocations; alas we every Minute break his Lawes and grieve his Spirit. *5ly,* Death looses the Knot in other Marriage Relations; but Death and the cold Grave brings the Souls of Believers nearer to the Enjoyment of their blessed Husband. *6ly,* No Match brings to such Honours as this, from the Day they are Contracted to Christ, God becomes their Father, the Holy Spirit their Sanctifier, Angels their Guard, their Servants, *Heb. 1. 14.* yet the Admirers of their Glory, *Revel. 21. 9.* *7ly,* No Espousals ever consummate with such Nuptial Solemnity, *Psal. 45. 14, 15. She shall be brought unto the King in Raiment of Needle-work, the Virgins her Companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee; with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, they shall enter into the Kings Palace: There will be infinite and eternal Joy and Raptures of Praise on all Hands.*

Secondly, Look on *Jesus* in the Relation of an Advocate, *1 John 2. 1. If any Man Sin, he have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; He pleads Believers Cause in Heaven, to keep the Peace betwixt God and them inviolable, O sweet Relation! He makes our Cause his own, and acts for us as for himself, Heb. 4. 15. He sets himself to this as his sole Business, all his Glory in Heaven will not divert him one Moment from this Work, Heb. 7. 25. He liveth for ever to make Intercession for them? He pleads not by Words as others do, but by his Blood, that Blood of Sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel, Heb. 12. 24. Every Wound he received for us on Earth is a Mouth opened to plead for us in Heaven; and, which raiseth the value of his whole Intercession for us, it is always Effectual, John 11. 41, 42. Jesus lift up his Eyes, and said, Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know thou hearest me always; No Cause was ever lost or miscarried in his Hands.*

Thirdly, Look on *Jesus* in the Relation of a dear Friend, how endearing is this Relation; for he is most open Hearted to his People, a Look from thee will draw forth the very Counsels and Secrets of his Heart to thee, *John 15. 15. His Friendship to Believers hath been most Expensive, it hath cost him his very Life, John 15. 13. He is a most Sympathizing Friend, In all our Afflictions he is afflicted, Isa. 63. 9. He takes a wonderful Complacency in his People, see how he expresseth it, Song 4. 4. Thou hast ravished my Heart, my Sister my Spouse, thou hast ravished my Heart with one of thine Eyes, with one Chain of thy Neck: A wonderful Expression from a Creator to a silly Creature!*

Fourthly, Look on *Jesus* as God himself, who is to be seen shining in his Face, *2 Cor. 4. 6. 19. God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, 2 Cor. 5. 6. God who commanded Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Christ Jesus. Nothing will invite your Hearts to look to Christ*

Hebrews XII. Verse 2.

33

Christ if this do it not: here is the mystery of Godliness, *God manifest in the flesh*; here look, and ye may see the Authority of God in Christ, *Evel. 23. 21. My Name is in him*. He hath the great Seal of Heaven to be a Jesus to save you, *John 6. 27. and will ye not spend your looks on him?* Here is the Wisdom of God shining in Jesus, *1 Cor. 1. 24. Col. 2. 23. In him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*. Here can be justified, *2 Cor. 5. 21. Jer. 23. 6. He is the Lord our Righteousness*. Look, and ye may see the Love of God in Jesus, what is Jesus but the Love of God wrapt up in Flesh and Blood? *1 John 4. 9, 10. In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him: Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins*. The Mercies of God all flow in the blessed Jesus, *Jude 1. 21. and finally the Salvation of God is to be found in him, Rom. 4. 12. Jesus is the Door of Salvation, and looking on him by Faith, the Key to open that Door to us; without this the Devils have as much ground to expect Salvation as we.*

Secondly, Look on Jesus in that marvellous Power set on Foot for conquering and bringing you in to himself, this he doth in a matchless Method; he gains Souls to himself gradually, bringing them step by step in the due Method and Order of the Gospel, by Illumination, Conviction, Compunction, and then engaging them to embrace the Offers of the Gospel: He gains their Consent in a rational way, *Job. 11. 4. I drew them with the Cords of a Man, and with Bands of Love*; Not as Beasts are drawn, but as Men are brought to Compliance by Conviction of their Judgments, and Persuasion of their Wills, managed by the Hand of Love; shewing there is enough in himself to preponderate, and much more than recompense all Evil and Sufferings ye can endure for his Sake. And in fine, he Converts Souls effectually and powerfully: It was a powerful Word at first that made Light to shine out of Darkness, and no less Power is required to make it shine into our Hearts, *2 Cor. 4. 6. There is a common Work on Hypocrites that's like the Morning Cloud and early Dew, Hos. 6. 4. but the Christian is Converted not almost, but altogether; tho' there be many Pauses, Stands and Demurs, yet at length Grace is made Victorious over all Opposition, and set home with Power on the Heart. It remains,*

Thirdly, That I give some Reasons why we are thus to look upon Jesus; what hath been already said may engage your Hearts to this lovely Work, I may further add, 1. Not only these things you have heard, but whatever else is Excellent is in him, there is a Mixture in all created Enjoyments, some things Excellent, some things Deficient; But look on Jesus, and see him altogether Lovely, with all Delight and Admiration; 2^d, All Excellencies that are to be found in the Creatures, are in him by way of Excellency, whatever is Great, Good or Sweet, look up to Jesus, and see it transcendentally in him. 3^d, The Lines of all Excellencies dwell and center in him in a more excellent Manner, *viz.* Perfectly, Infinitely, Unchangeably, and Eternally. O then run looking to Jesus, let thine Eyes never be off him. Hence, Take one *Life of Esau*. Look so on Jesus, as his matchless Worth may vail all other Pleasures, all *Amors and Honors*, all *Weights and easily besetting Sins*. Look on these things in him that have been proposed to your View, and doubtless ye will press forward to this Prize over all Letts and Difficulties. Tho' what is said be sufficient to enforce this; yet further consider, *First*, Can ye find a more Excellent, Worthier, and Glorious Object to set your Eyes upon than Jesus? I will not say but your Eyes may

may think otherways, yet sure ye dare not say it? Are Riches, Honours, Pleasures, Relations, which ye look on with Delight comparable to Christ? Is not all the worth in the Creature but as a drop to the Sea, as a Candle to the Sun, when compared to what is in Jesus? Oh sirs, will your Souls hesitate about this? Say, is not Jesus a Good suitable for thee? As Bread to the Hungry, as Health to the Sick, as Ease to the Wearied, so is Jesus to a sinful Man. For art thou not ruined and undone, and next Door to be Damned? Here is a Jesus to be thy Deliverer and Saviour, *Ezek. 34. 16. Isa. 62. 1.* Art thou not Ignorant, Dark and Blind, knows not the way to Heaven, might seek it long, and miss it when all is done? The Lord Christ will infallibly direct and guide thee, *John 14. 6. Rev. 3. 18. Isa. 42. 16. I will bring the Blind by a way that they know not.* Art thou not Sick, full of deadly Maladies and Soul-distempers? Lo, Jesus is a Physician able and skilful to a Wonder, never one died among his Hands, *Matth. 9. 12.* Art thou a Divor Debtor, owest thou Millions to God, and has not a Mite to pay? A look to Christ will secure thee a Cautioner, if Justice pursue thee, Death arrest thee, Devils be ready to secure thy Soul, and hail it to Hell-Prison, from which no Deliverance, Jesus will be Bail and Surety for thee to Justice, *Heb. 7. 22.* yea discharge thy Debts, only give him a Look. Art thou vile and unclean, the Leprosie of Sin hath tainted thee universally, thy Understanding, VVill, Conscience, Actions, and Affections? Our Lord hath promised to take away thy filthy Garments, and give thee Change of Raiment, *Zeck. 3. 1, 2, 3. Isa. 1. 18.* Art thou the Devils Drudge, bound to the lothsom Service of Sin, thy Bondage harder than *Israel's* in Egypt, loves thou not thy Chains, art thou weary of thy Fetters? would thou be releas'd? then give a Look to Jesus, and he'll do it by Price and by Power. And to be short, art thou not an Enemy to God, born so, and lived so? Beware thou die not so, for then the Breach will be Eternal: But if thou be willing to throw down the VVeapons of thy Rebellion, lo Jesus is thy Peace-maker, *Colos. 1. 20.* Now, if this be thy Condition, Jesus can, and is ready and willing to help thee in every respect, how suitable is he for thee to look upon? Say then, I am so Ignorant, Sick, Vile, and Undone, and a wretched Enemy to God, but Jesus will relieve me, therefore I'll go looking to him. 2ly, Is not Jesus the most satisfying Good, thou art Indigent, he will supply thee, Empty, he'll fill thee, Poor, he'll enrich thee, Naked, he'll clothe thee? O for a lively and loving Look to such a Jesus! 3ly, Is not Jesus the most durable Good? Can thou set thy Heart on any thing here but what will fail thee, thy Pleasures, Lovers, Friends, all shall fail thee, but Christ shall never fail thee, *Psal. 73. 26.* 4ly, Is not Jesus a peculiar Good? All other things thou looks on are common to the bad as well as the good; but there is a Guard and Fence on sweet and lovely Jesus, he is given by peculiar Love, to a peculiar People, bringing with him peculiar Privileges; The Man whose Portion is in this World can say all these things are mine, but dare not say blest Jesus is mine. 5ly, Is he not the most necessary Good? Without other things thou may be Happy, Pardoned, Reconciled and Saved; but this cannot be without Jesus, when all shall leave thee at the Grave side, he'll be thy Friend and abide by thee for ever. 6ly, Is not he most Profitable? For, when thou has him thou has all, God is thine, the Spirit, the Promises, the Privileges of the Covenant, and Heaven for ever, *1 Cor. 3. 21, 22, 23.* 7ly, Is he not a most delightful Object to look on, *Psal. 45. 2. Father than the Sons of Men;* some delight in one thing, some in another, but Christ infinitely surpasses them all, *Song 5. 10—16. He is white and ruddy, his Head as most fine Gold, his Locks bushy and black as the Raven; His Cheeks are as a Bed of Spices, his Lips like Lillies dropping sweet swelling*

Hebrews XII. Verse 2.

33

Smelling Myrror: His Hands as Gold-rings set with the Beryl; His Legs are as Pillars of Marble. His Mouth is most sweet, yea he is altogether Lovely. He is the Darling of Heaven, the Delight of Angels and blessed Saints, whom all Saints on Earth Admire, Love, Wonder and Adore: and, if any Man Love him not, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha, 1 Cor. 16. 22. Sly, He is the surest Object to be enjoyed, other things God may give, and call for them back again, Hos. 2. 9. I will return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the season thereof, and recover my Wool and my Flax; but the Lord never says, such a Man I gave a Look of my Jesus, and I'll take him from him again, no, he may take away Riches out of thy Hand, but he will never take Jesus out of thy Heart. So much for the first Motive to advance Jesus in thy Look, from the Advantages in him, and sweet Properties of him.

Motive 2. Christian Pilgrim go on thy way looking to Jesus, hath he not deserved thy Looks, yea, the chief Room of thy Heart to which thine Eyes are Windows, by what he hath done, suffered, purchased and promised for such as go looking unto Jesus, look on a Crown of Thorns set on him, that a Crown of Glory may be set on thee, look on him dying, that thou may live poor, that thou may be rich, condemned, that thou may be absolved: And tell me, doth not this Jesus deserve thy most serious Looks? Hath any done the like for thee?

Motive 3. As he is the best Object, and most deserving thou can look upon, so thy looking to Jesus is the best of Looks, its the sweetest of Looks; look on Riches, that's but Vexatious, thy Relations, if bad, looking on them will give thee a fresh Wound, if good, the more ill befalls them, the more thou will be grieved; but O what solid Satisfaction, Joy, Comfort and Delight attends looking to Jesus! 'tis the most Soul-exalting Look, being terminate on the highest Object, it carries the Soul in its Thoughts and Meditations after him into the highest Heavens, O sublime raised Looks! And of all other Looks this shall fix longest on its Object, you shall have done looking on the World, Pleasures and Honours here shortly, Death will put an end to all, but never to looking unto Jesus.

Forcibly, If Jesus get not your Looks, the World will, Sin will: Now judge if this be reasonable to deny them to lovely Jesus, and give them to these his Rivals: Will you send out your Love in your Looks to what is worse than your selves, and not on that which is infinitely better when in your Offer? Do you think your Gold, and Silver, Lands and Honours better than your selves? would you not part with all for your Life? but dare you say but Jesus is better, O then let thine Eye never be off him. Can ye look with Pleasure and Delight on that which cannot look so to you again, what cares thy Riches who be the Possessors of them, thy Enemies be as welcome to them as thy self: But sweet Jesus will give thee infinitely more ravishing Looks than thou art capable to give him, and thou shalt have more Room in his Heart. Will ye look on what will never satisfy you, and refuse to look on Jesus, who would completely satisfy you for ever? How can these temporary Vanities content your Desires, when God hath made you capable of enjoying an infinite Good, how can finite things please? all the Creatures cannot fill one Soul, Eccles. 1. 10. He that loveth Silver shall not be satisfied with Silver, nor he that loveth Abundance with Increase, this also is Vanity. Why would ye keep all your Thoughts to that you must shortly part with, and close your Eyes upon, never to look on again, and not look on Jesus, whom these glorified Eyes shall behold in his Fathers Kingdom for ever and ever? Why look on that may hinder your everlasting Happiness, and not on him who is the Purchaser

and Promoter of it? *Eccles. 3. 12. Fishes are kept for the waters thereof to their hurt; and men shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of God; but a Look of Jesus will make Salvation possible, easie, and certain.*

Fifthly, Go on looking to *Jesus*, from want of this it comes that Duties of Religion are so tedious and tedious, a burden to Pray, Hear, Read, Meditate, and do the like Duties: But a Look of *Jesus* would fire thy Heart in these, make hard things easie, and heavy burthens light.

Sixthly, Can ye have a Face to look for Heaven when ye die, that refuse to go looking on him while you live, shall ye get Pardon and Peace? No, get you gone, depart from me, ye refused me a Look, ye shall never more see my Face in Peace.

Seventhly, Think ye it not a great Condescension that he allows you a Look of him, now many Men, a King, a Prince, or a Great Man, it is not easie to get a sight of them, Moven and Money must pave the Way: But our sweet *Jesus* pulls the Vail off his Glory, and invites poor Believers to go looking on him, never to take their Eyes off him, from their new Birth to their Burial, and thereafter their Eyes shall open in Glory, and they shall never be off him to Eternity.

Eighthly, The Day is coming when you will turn your back on Christ and Religion, if now ye turn your Eyes off him, if Temptation and Trials come, will ye ever stand your Ground? Will not the World, Home, or Ease on which ye look now so bent, carry you off? To be sure what the Eye and Heart is most set upon, ye will endeavour to keep longest, and let Religion shift for it self.

I proceed to a third Doctrine from this great Duty, *Looking unto Jesus*, Viz.

That he who looks to Jesus, so as conscientiously imitate his Example, shall successfully finish his Christian Race.

The Apostle having proponed the Example of the Cloud of Witnesses who professed the same Faith with our selves, now ascends higher, and propones him who is the Author and Finisher of that Faith in us all. The same Duty is pressed by many other Texts of Scripture, as 1 John 2. 6. 1 Pet. 1. 15. Chap. 2. 21. Ephes. 5. 2. *Matth. 11. 29.*

In opening this Point, Method may require, I should, *First*, Shew what is supposed and imported in this, that we are to take Christ for our Pattern and Example. *2ly*, In what particulars we are obliged to follow his Example. *3ly*, That this is necessary for succeeding in our Christian Race. *Lastly*, Apply the whole.

And *First*, Saints Imitation of Christ as their Pattern and Example supposes and imports, 1. The Necessity of Sanctification in all Christ's Followers; for herein lies the Conformity we are to aim at, we must first Live in the Spirit, before we can Walk in the Spirit. *2ly*, That our lovely Religion is very strict, allowing no Man in Licentiousness, 2 Tim. 2. 19. *Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from Iniquity*; we must resemble the Life of Christ, or we deserve not the Name of a Christian. *3ly*, That no Man may take himself for his Rule and Pattern, to do according to his own Self-witted Temper, this were daringly to intrude upon the Divine Prerogative, Jer. 10. 23. *It is not in Man that walketh to direct his Steps.* *4ly*, That no Man may give out himself as a Rule, Pattern and Example to others. The Apostle indeed saith, *We should be followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises*, Heb. 6. 12. yet this is explained by the same Apostle, 1 Cor. 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ.* *5ly*, There is a Short-coming and Deficiency in the best of Men, the best of Men may blush when they compare their Lives with his, who was *Holy, Harmless, Undesled, separate from Sinners,*

That Jesus himself was the most perfect and most amiable of all men for our sake which is the end of every kind in the Kingdom of the world. He made conformable unto Christ in the up Height of the most eminent of the Saints Desires, Phil. 3. 18.

Secondly, I am to shew in what Particulars we are to look to Jesus, as to imitate and follow his Example. And, 1. In his peaceable Nature and Disposition; he was the Prince of Peace, Mat. 5. 9. He preached the Gospel of Peace, Eph. 2. 17. He purchased Peace for us by his bloody Sweatings, Heb. 9. 14. and he lived quietly and peaceably in the World, Mark. 16. 7. Surely then it is fiteable for his Disciples to follow Peace with all Men, Heb. 12. 14. not to create Disturbance in Church or State, but to promote in every Society Peace and Truth. 2ly, Look to Jesus, so as to imitate him in Meekness, When he was reviled he reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not, as a sheep meek and lowly in heart, Matth. 11. 29. 'Tis unsuteable to be overcome by the boisterous Hurricane of Passion; how commendable was it in the Apostle, who became all things to all Men, that by all means he might save some, 1 Cor. 9. 22. (373) This blessed Jesus was much in Prayer, Mark 1. 35. In the morning rising up a great while before day, he departed to a solitary place, and there prayed, Luke 6. 12. He went into a mountain, and continued all night in prayer to God. O Christian, endeavour to look like Jesus in this Duty, Matth. 6. 6. When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Surely thou Christian art more conveniently in some respect called to Prayer? Our holy Jesus had no Sin of his own for which he was obliged to ask Pardon, thou art covered with Sin as with a Garment, his Graces and Duties were all Perfect, think altogether imperfect. 3ly, Look to Jesus, so as to imitate him in holy Zeal for God's Glory, this did eat him up, John 4. 19. This noble Grace is alas much wanting in this sinful Generation, but is the Ornament of a Christian Profession, and as such is oft recommended, Gal. 4. 13. Acts 2. 19. 4ly, Imitate Jesus in his fervent Love to his People. Having loved his own which were in the World, he loved them to the end, John 13. 1. He loved us and gave himself for us, Eph. 5. 2. How reasonable is it we should account his People as the excellent ones in the earth, Psal. 16. 3. and should take Delight in their Converse, Malachi 3. 16. 5ly, Look to Jesus, so as to follow his Example in his Converse, which was always edifying, dropping words for converting graceless Sinners, or for edifying and comforting weak Saints, Heb. 4. 12. He had compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, John 6. 63. the words he spake were Spirit and Life. And to be sure, O Christian, Your speech should always be as the pen of a ready Writer, to express the Praises of the blessed Jesus. 6ly, Look to Jesus, so as to be like him in the tender Respect he had to his weak Followers, He carried his lamb in his bosom, and gently led them which are with young, Isa. 40. 11. The beautiful word he mouthed and break, the sounding shew he would not quench, Hag. 2. 3. Matth. 19. 20. And for a Challenge, as your Duty is to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak, to be patient toward all men, 1 Thel. 5. 14. 8ly, When our blessed Lord was engaged in the Society of the Men, he endeavoured still to gain them to the Way of Holiness, So Christians ought, as far as they can, to shun the Society of the wicked World, Psal. 134. 4. Psal. 139. 17. Psal. 140. But if engaged in their Society, you ought to endeavour to gain their Souls, To have compassion upon them, to save them with fear, pulling them out of the fire, Jude 12, 23.

11y. Our blessed Jesus was of a most forgiving Spirit; when on the Cross, he prayed for his Enemies, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*, Luke 23. 34. This he recommends, not only by his Example, but also by his Doctrine, *Matth. 6. 14. 15. 23.* He was tender of giving Offence, and therefore payed Tribute to *Cæsar*; Yet when necessarily called to Duty, as to converse with Publicans and Sinners for their Souls Good, he would not abstain because of the groundless Snuff of the Pharisees. 12y. He kept himself always within the Bounds of his Station, when one came to him, saying, *Speak to my Brother that he divide the Inheritance with me*. He answered, *Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you*, Luke 12. 13. 14. When Pilate asked him, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* He answered, *My Kingdom is not of this World*, John 18. 36. So let Christians be zealous of good Works, but always within the Limits of their Station. 13y. Imitate Jesus in his Humility and Lowliness that did shine in his Life, *Matth. 11. 29.* He could abase and empty himself of all his Glory, stoop to the meanest Office, even to wash his Disciples feet. If you be proud and of an aspiring Humour, you deserve not the name of a Christian: Pride springs from Ignorance of God and of our selves, who knows God will be humble, *Jeb. 42. 5. 6. Isa. 6. 5.* Pride estranges the Soul from God, *Psal. 138. 6.* Provokes God to lay you low, *Jeb. 40. 12.* 'Tis a Sign of Hypocrisy, *Habak. 2. 4.* and goes before Destruction, *Prov. 16. 18.* 14y. Imitate Jesus in his Contentment with his low Estate, *Isa. 53. 7.* Let there be no murmuring Complaints or foolish Charges of God heard in all your Straits and Tryals: for the meanest Believer is Owner of most invaluable Riches, *1 Cor. 3. 22. Eph. 1. 3.* Is Sin passion'd, and God reconcil'd? Never open your mouth any more: How Useful and Beneficial are all your Afflictions to purge away Sin, and wean you from the World? How many sweet Promises belong to you in your greatest Straits? *Heb. 12. 5. Isa. 41. 17.* The time of your Deliverance is at hand, *1 Cor. 7. 29.* 'tis but a short while and the Day shall break and the shadow flee away, and you land at that City, the Inhabitant whereof shall not say, *I am Sick*. 15y. Imitate Jesus in his holy Delight in the Service of God, and Obedience to his Will, he did always the things that pleased him, *John 8. 29.* He says, *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work*, *John 4. 34.* O Christians follow his Foot-steps, do nothing grudgingly for God, let not his Command seem grievous; But let your Obedience be Universal, Sincere and Constant. Take Delight in his Service, nothing can be a more incontest'd Evidence of your Sincerity than this; this will be a choice Mean of Perseverance. The Reason of Apostacy is, That many Souls never tasted of the Sweetness of Religion, but Believers who taste of it, shall be as a tree planted by the rivers of waters, whose leaf fadeth not: This will commend Religion to others, and this will make all your Services safe to your selves, and acceptable to God thro' Jesus Christ. Lastly, Look to Jesus so as to imitate him in his Self-denial, in this he is proposed as our Example, *Phil. 2. 5. 8. Matth. 11. 29.* He left the Bosom of the Father, with all the ineffable Delights in Glory, to drink a bitter Cup of Suffering for us, he became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief for our sake: Is it not then reasonable that we at his Call and Command, should forsake and deny father and mother, wife and children, *Luke 14. 26.* That we should renounce all trust and dependance upon our own Duties and Performances, *Phil. 3. 8.* How utterly Incapable were we of laying any Obligation on him, to deny himself in the least for us? But what strong Ties ly upon us to deny our greatest Interests for him? Your denying your selves is consented to by you in Covenanting with Jesus, if you have Covenanted in the right Manner. And to conclude, your Self-denial makes for your Soul's Advantage in both Worlds, *Luke 18. 29, 30.* Verily I say unto you, no man hath left house or parents,

manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. **Thirdly**, I am to shew why our Looking to Jesus, so as to imitate him as our *Example* and *Pattern*, is so necessary in order to our succeeding in our Christian Race. Now this appears necessary at the first View, because Jesus is appointed to all the Elect as the alone Path-way to Heaven, so that if his Foot-steps be not traced by continual looking on and imitating of him, we cannot but miss the way, if a Man look off his way, his Motion and his Look not going together, he is sure of falling into a Pit, instead of arriving at the City, whither he is designed: Now, that Jesus is thus set in our View as the High-way to the Kingdom, and therefore to be imitate by us, is evident by his own Report, *John 14. 6.* *Heb. 12. 19, 20.* If you keep your Eye on him, you cannot miss the Way, for he hath purchased that Glory, whither thou art bound in thy Christian Race; He clearly manifests the Way, *2 Tim. 1. 10.* and he prepares thee to run successfully in the Way, *Coloss. 1. 27.* He goes before thee for thy Conduct and Example, he is called *the captain of our Salvation*, *Heb. 2. 10.* By his Example he hath marked out every Step of the way to Glory, by his Word he discovers the way of Life and Peace, and by his Spirit he enables us to follow both his Word and Example. *3/5.* Your Names oblige you to look like Christ in your Walk, ye are named *Disciples*, *Matth. 16. 24.* *Acts 11. 26.* therefore you should be like your Masters, ye are called his *Followers*, *Matth. 16. 24.* and you ought to follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes; you are Christ's Sheep, and you should hear his Voice, *John 10. 27.* You are Christians, *Acts 11. 26.* you can never deserve this Name except you walk like Christ, renounce the Name of a Christian, or live like the Holy Jesus; fight like *Alexander*, or renounce the Name of *Alexander*, this Conformity to Christ is the ground of Communion with him, it makes you capable of the Anointing of the same Spirit, *John 2. 27.* and fit for eternal Glory, *Rom. 8. 29, 30.* *Heb. 12. 14.* *4/5.* Go looking unto Jesus and imitating him; for believe except you do this, you shall perish Eternally, *Acts 4. 12.* *Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we must be saved.* The old Patriarchs knew no other way, *John 8. 56.* *Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my Day, and he saw it, and was glad.* The Prophets knew no other way, *Acts 16. 42.* The Apostles knew and taught this and this only way, *1 Cor. 2. 2.* *Acts 4. 12.* There is no need of any other way, for Jesus hath sufficient of every thing in him that can be thought on as necessary for coming to Heaven, one Sun is sufficient for the natural World, and so is one Jesus for one Elect World. Yea there is a Curse denounced against them that look for any other way, *John 8. 20.* *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your Sin.*

Use 1. Of Reproof to such as dream of coming to Heaven another way than by looking to Jesus, and living like him; the vain conceit Heart of Man is not content with this way God has ordered, this is both his Folly and his Sin. The *Pope* he will make his own Works the way to Heaven, and expects his Merits will show up the Gates: But consider, *1.* The best of Man's Works are imperfect, more dross than Gold in them, *Isa. 64. 6.* *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags;* the best of our Works need pardoning Grace, *Neb. 13. 22.* *2/5.* Our good Works are not our own, our ill Works are our own, we breed them and nurse them; but our good Works are wrought in us and for us, *Eph. 2. 10.* they are the Fruits of the Spirit, *Gal. 5. 22.* *3/5.* Good Works are God's due, when we have done them, we should say, we are but unprofitable Servants, *Luke 17. 10.* The Payment of an old Debt will not purchase the *Heavenly Inheritance*.

Of the Grace of Faith, its Nature, its Effects, its Warrant, its Ground, and its Perfection of Faith in his People.

To prepare this Discourse for your Use, I shall first open up the Nature of *Saving Faith*.

2^d. Show in what respects *Jesus* is the *Author* and *Finisher* of Faith.

As to the *First*, This Grace of Faith is a *Gift* of *God*, and is a *Grace* which is *bestowed* by the *Spirit* through the *Word* in the *Heart* of a *Believer*.

Grace is a *Gift*, 1st John 4: 10. The *Gift* of Faith is a *Grace*, 1st John 5: 4. The *Gift* of Faith is a *Grace*, 1st John 5: 4. The *Gift* of Faith is a *Grace*, 1st John 5: 4.

Christ is the *Author* of Faith, 1st John 5: 4. Christ is the *Author* of Faith, 1st John 5: 4. Christ is the *Author* of Faith, 1st John 5: 4.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

It is wrought in the *Heart* of a *Believer*, this is the only *Subject* capable of it, Rom. 10: 10. With the *Heart* the *Man* believeth.

purchased Heaven and not Faith, none of Adam's Posterity had ever come there. He must be the Author of it, because he is the Object and Foundation of it; it begins and terminates it self ultimately in Christ, whether it respect the Doctrine of Faith, *John 20. 31. These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.* Or the Grace of Faith, Christ and his Righteousness is the Fundamental Object of justifying Faith, *1st. 2. 22. The Life which I live in the Flesh is by Faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* *2d. 3. 9. The Righteousness which is of God by Faith.* Take Away Christ there is no Place for Faith. *3d.* The usual Means whereby Faith is begotten is by Christ's Appointment, *Rom. 10. 14. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* This is the glorious Instrument in Christ's Hand, whereby Faith is fashion'd and form'd, he as the great Prophet of his Church hath created this Ministry of the Gospel for beginning and encreasing this Grace, *1st. we come to the Unity of the Faith, and unity the Treasure of the Spouse of the Church of Christ, Eph. 4. 3. — 1. 4.* *2d.* Christ is the Author of Faith by the secret Energy and Efficacy of his Spirit, which comes with the Word; by this the poor Sinner is made to see himself lost by Guilt, and utterly unable to free himself from Misery, and discovers Christ in what he hath done and suffered in our Room, and in our Nature, to be the only Remedy for the guilty Sinner; and therefore is cheerfully willing to deny himself and his own Righteousness, and to venture the Salvation of his Soul upon the purchased Righteousness of Christ Jesus, *Phil. 3. 8, 9.* *3d.* By Christ's Procurement are all the Promises, which serve for begetting and encreasing Faith, *2 Cor. 1. 20. All the Promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen.* *4th.* He is the Author of Faith as he takes us off from a Possibility of coming at Heaven any other way but by believing, since Salvation cannot now be procured by our own Obedience, this is out of Doors, it must be procured by the Obedience of another, of Christ in our Room, and his Obedience we must accept by Faith, or we shall surely perish, *John 3. 18, 36.*

Now as the blessed Jesus doth begin, so in the following respects he doth carry on and finish the Work of Faith, 1. By drawing Faith and exciting the infused Principle thereof to Acting; Habits Spiritual as well as Natural, are strengthened by Frequency of Acts; our blessed Lord causes the North and South Wind blow upon the Garden, that the Spices may flow out, *Song 4. 16.* The warm Influences of his Spirit makes Faith and other Graces to act vigorously. *2d.* The renewed Views of his imputed Righteousness tends exceedingly to the promoting and advancing of Faith, *by the Gospel of Christ the Righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith, Rom. 1. 16, 17.* *3d.* Christ promotes and strengthens Faith by giving his Presence in and with the Means of Grace, Prayer encreaseth Faith, *Luke 17. 5.* The Word preached promotes it, *Rom. 10. 17.* The Sacraments are Seals of the Righteousness of Faith, *Rom. 4. 11.* *4th.* Christ encreases Faith by his Intercession, *Luke 22. 32. I have prayed for thee that thy Faith fail not;* there is a *Meiosis* in the Words, signifying not only that Christ prays that Peter's Faith may not utterly fail, but also that it may be encreased and perfected. The Seeds of Corruption, the Cares of the World, and the Snare of Satan are ready to nip this tender Plant in the Bud, but our Lord waters it by the Influences of his Grace, he curbs and removes Satans Snare which are used for choking it, *Zech. 3. 2.* and preserves this noble Grace till it be transplanted into Glory, where Faith is swallowed up in Vision, and Hope in Fruition. *5d.* Christ dwells in our Hearts by Faith, *Eph. 3. 17.* Faith is the Bond on our part which unites us with Christ; what a Wonder is this, that Christ should dwell in such Hearts as ours, where Sin and Idols have dwelt,

Hebrews XII. Verse 2.

43

where Satan hath had his Seat, that he should dwell there, not for a Day, but for ever. That he should dwell there as a King on his Throne to rule us by his Law, to pacify our inward Troubles, *Isa. 26. 3.* To feast us with Tokens of his Love. Christ drops a live Coat from above, for Strengthening and Increasing our Faith, when 'tis very weak. How weak was Thomas's Faith, *John 20. 24.* Yet when the Lord says, *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and behold my side, and be not faithless, but believing.* then Faith displays its Colour, *verse 28.* leads them into the Banqueting-house, makes his Banner over them Love, gives them Liberty to Pray, hears their Requests, gives Peace of Conscience, puts a Song of Joy in their Mouth, or gives them Assurance of his Love, and then they can be no more Faithless, but Believing. 79. He easeth them of Maladies and Disorders which tend to the weakening and marring the Growth of Faith; every sin, every distrustful thought of God, are great Hindrances to the Saints Progress in this Grace; which the Lord graciously by the Work of Mortification removes. Finally, Christ finishes this Work of Faith, he puts on the Cap-stone with Shoutings of Grace, Grace, he prepares us for Glory, *Coloss. 1. 12.* He brings us to the Enjoyment of it, *John 14. 3.* There Faith shall be compleat in Vision, Hope in Fruition: There we shall be like him, and see him as he is, there we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne, shall feed us, and shall lead us, and God shall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes.

Use 1st Of Information. If Christ the Author of Faith, then Believers hold their Faith on a sure and firm Ground. Christ is the Author, and all the Work is solid and firm; if thou be sure is he of his Working, persuade thy self it will ride out all Storms can be supposed: If this Golden Knot be cast betwixt him and thy Soul, thou may cry out with the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 34. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

Inference 2^d. Faith must be of transcendent Excellency, since 'tis the Product of his Wisdom and Power, *2 Pet. 1. 1.* It's called Precious Faith, it's Excellency kithes in the rare Uses it serves for to a Believer; it's the Eye of the new Creature pointing out his Way thro' the darkest Steps and dangerous Pits on every side; 'Tis the Soul's Foot, by this he lets out in coming to Christ, *John 6. 37.* 'Tis the Believer's Hand, which leans on his Beloved's Shoulder, *Song 8. 5.* a Prop absolutely necessary: And 'tis a notable Cordial in Believers fainting Fits, *Psal. 27. 13. I had fainted unless I had believed, Psal. 77. 9. 10. Elah God forgets to be gracious. I said this is mine infirmity, but I will remember the Years of the right hand of the most high.*

Inference 3^d. The Grace of Faith is indispensibly necessary, Christ is the Author of nothing that's in vain. Precious Faith is necessary for Justification, no Faith no Pardon; For Consolation, by the Eye of Faith, we read our Charter-right to Heaven, *2 Cor. 5. 1.* For we know that if our earthly house be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. *verse 7. For we walk by faith and not by sight.* Faith is also necessary for our Acceptation with God, *Heb. 11. 6.* and for our Salvation, *John 3. 18. He that believeth hath eternal life, he that believeth not is condemned already.*

Inference 4th. There is a Divine Omnipotent Power in the Mediator productive of this Noble Grace of Faith, *Ephes. 1. 19.* How opposite is the Heart of Man to Faith? what insuperable Battails must be carried out of the Way? how far is it above Reason to believe and rely on another for Salvation, to be Just by anothers Righteousness, to be Enriched by anothers Wealth, to be Beautiful by anothers Comeliness, and Strong by borrowed Strength?

Inference 3th. Hence it appears that the whole Salvation of the Elect World does entirely depend on Christ, seeing he is the Author of our very Faith, which is the first requisite to lay hold on it when offered; all is in and from Christ, Coloss. 2. 11. *Faith is all and in all*, 1 John 5. 11. *God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* How Reasonable is it for us to admire his Grace and Love to Sinners, and the Glory of his Power, to depend on him while in a present World; and to long to be in Heaven, where we may joyn with the Heavenly Quoristers, in singing to him who hath laid the Foundation and put on the Head-Stone with shoutings of Grace, Grace! To sing a new Song, *Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*

Use 2d. Of Exhortation, And First, To you who are yet Strangers to this Precious Grace of Faith. Consider 1. The infinite Misery you are involved in, being destitute of this Noble and Cardinal Grace, you're in your selves lost and undone, the Remedy, tho' propon'd, yet, without Faith, you can never make Use of it. 2. Think therefore what you are to do in order to gain this Grace, go to Christ who is the Author of it, Ministers and the Word of Reconciliation in their Mouths, be but the Instrumental Cause, you must look higher, go a little further, and you shall find it; Pray, pray to him who is the Author and Giver. 3. If Christ be the Author of Faith, then let none from a Sense of their own Insufficiency and Inability despair of obtaining it. When a poor Body considers what a mighty Work Faith is, how opposite by Nature the Heart is to it, how many Impediments there be to marr it, and how long he hath lived under the Means of Grace without it; He is ready to sit down and cry out, *'Tis impossible for this Grace to be wrought in me!* But this is enough to Answer all, Christ is the Author of it, what cannot he do? Let Means be never so weak, Opposition never so strong, Difficulties never so great! In opposition to all Contradictions and Objections never despair, while the Work is in Christ's Hand, he can do in one Hour, what thou thinks impossible, and that by the weakest Means.

2d. This Doctrine Exhorts you who have found Christ the Author of Faith in you; 1. Be sensible of whom you hold it, 'tis not from Nature nor from your Selves, but alone from Christ, he that created thy Soul, created thy Faith, as thy Life is from him, so is thy Faith. 2. Employ your Faith in his Service, as he is the Author, so let him be the Object of it, John 14. 1. *Believe in God, believe also in me:* He has not wrought this Grace to be idle; Let it close with him, act on him, put forth this Grace in Reference to Precepts and Promises, use it in Prayer, in Hearing, in Communicating, in Doing and Suffering: This is the best Way to please the Author of your Faith, and to strengthen and increase the same. 3. Value it highly, you can do nothing acceptable to God without it, you can neither Pray, Hear, Repeat, nor Die aright without it; Make much of it for its Author's sake; to slight this Grace, is to slight Christ.

Use 3d. For Conviction, To such as are Strangers to this Faith, Christ has never been the Author of it in them; They are stuffed with gross Unbelief, and thereby neglects the sweet Offers of Jesus Christ: In this lies the very Malignity of Sin, and the Sum of all Misery. For 1. Hereby you put the greatest Contempt and Slight upon all the Attributes of God that's possible for a Creature to do; God hath made his Wisdom, Justice, Goodness, and Mercy shine brightly in Christ; Never was there such a Display of the Glory of God to the World, but by your Unbelief you put an Affront on this Glory, as if Christ were not to be Esteemed, as if there were some other Way of Salvation than by him. 2. Hereby you frustrate the very Design of the Gospel to your Selves.

Gal. 3. 1. Cor. 6. 1. This receive the grace of God in vain. 3. Hereby you murder your own Soul. *John 8. 24. If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your Sins.* Unbelief is Self-murder. Your Unbelief in refusing Christ will aggravate your Damnation above all others who perish in Ignorance. *Math. 11. 20—26. John 14. 22.* Unbelievers will be found at last to be the greatest of Sinners, and their Hell shall be hottest.

Use 14. Of Tryal. If what you call Faith be of Christ as the Author, on if it be mere Presumption; whereof Satan and thy Self-deluding Heart are the Authors and Workers? Signs of Presumption are; 1. A strong carnal Confidence, *Luke 11. 21. When a strong Man armed keeps his Palace, his Goods are in Peace.* 2ly, A silent and fear'd Conscience, when Believers are watching and trembling, they sleep securely, so they live, and so sometimes they die, *Psal. 73. 4. They have no Bands in their Death.* 3ly, Hope without true Ground; I hope all shall be well, says the presumptuous Person, What is the Ground, the Word on which he hath caused you to hope? He knows no such thing, like the Jew whom Christ reproves, *John 8. 54, 55. Ye say he is your God, yet ye have not known him.* Consider this, your Hope is but as a Spiders-Web, and you are really without God and Hope in this World, *Eph. 2. 12.* True it is, Satan and your wicked Hearts bolster up your Hopes with these seeming Grounds, which at last shall vanish as shadows, and leave you miserable for ever; As, 1. Church Privileges, *Math. 23. 9. We have Abraham to our father, we are Baptiz'd and profess to be Christians,* is all the Ground many have for their Hope. 2. Natural Ignorance, *They see not they fear not,* a blind Man stands secure in face of Canon mounted at his Breast, Satan could never quiet Man, if he did not first blind him. 3. External Performance of Duties, they put their own Righteousness in Room of Christ, and there they rest. 4. Self-love, they think no ill of themselves, cannot judge themselves such as the Word does. 5. They compare themselves with Men grossly profane and more wicked than themselves, and thus hush their Consciences asleep like the proud Pharisee, *Luke 18. 11.* So much to shew what this Faith is not, it is not Presumption, whereof Sinners and Satan are Authors.

But Positively, Try if Christ be the Author of that Faith that is in you; 1. By the way and manner of its first Arising; 2ly, By the Fruits and Effects of it.

First, Try if Christ has wrought Faith in you by the Nature of its first Arising. 1. The Vail is rent in twain, the Souls Eyes opened to see it self gone, to see Christ the only Remedy in his Person and Offices; hence Faith is called Knowledge, *Isa. 53. 11.* and it is inseparably Connected with believing, *John 6. 44, 45. Every Man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh to me.* 2ly, He carries on the Work by the Souls hearty Approbation, Liking and Estimation; yea the Acquiescence of our very Soul in Christ, as the most excellent, suitable and compleat Remedy for all our Wants, Sins and Dangers, and so rests and trusts in him, *1 Pet. 2. 7. To you who Believe he is precious,* for the Soul finds nothing in him that is Dislikeful, no Weakness, but a Fulness of all saving Abilities, *Heb. 7. 25. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.* There is no Pride in him to scorn away Sinners, no Levity to cast them off again, no, there is no Spot in him, *Song 5. 16.* There is nothing wanting that is Desirable or Necessary, there is a fulness of Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption to us in him, *1 Cor. 1. 30.* Nothing left to desire but the Fulness of the Enjoyment of himself: Hence the Soul cries, how compleatly, yea infinitely Happy shall I be, if I can gain Christ. I should not envy the Richest, the most Noble and Honourable.

Honourable Man on Faith. 2y, The blessed Author of our Faith directs the Will of the Sinner to the Choice of himself, and open the Heart to embrace himself, *Psal. 110. 3. Thy People shall be willing by a Day of thy Power.* The great Scope of the Gospel is to bring the Sinner to this Frame. 4y, The Soul is made cheerfully to accept of the Terms on which Christ is tendered, *1 Cor. 15. 11. So we preach, and so ye believed.* Faith answers the Gospel Offer, as the Impress on Wax doth the Engravings in the Seal: This is of highest Consideration, for either must we take him as offered, or part with him for ever. This is the great Controversie betwixt Christ and Sinners, and on this thousands break off the Treaty and part with him. But as he offers himself, so this Faith whereof he is the Author receives; as, 1. The Gospel offers to us Christ sincerely and really, and so the Soul accepts with Faith unfeigned, *1 Tim. 1. 9.* If ever you be in earnest in any thing, it is in this; is not a Man in earnest when flying for his Life from the Avenger of Blood to the City of Refuge? So is it in this Case, for under this Notion is Faith described, *Heb. 6. 18.* 2y, The Gospel offers Christ wholly without dividing him, Hypocrites divide, but the Faith whereof Christ is the Author takes Christ wholly: Our Ignorance calls for Christ as a Prophet to remove it, our Guilt discovers the Necessity of Christ as a Priest to satisfy Justice, our powerful Corruptions can only be subdued by his Kingly Power; so there is nothing in Christ superfluous, nothing can be spared. 3y, The Gospel offers Christ as the alone Way of Salvation, excluding all others, *Acts 4. 12. Neither is there Salvation in any other.* With his Blood and Intercession nothing is to be mixed; thus the believing Soul makes mention of his Righteousness, and his only, *Psal. 71. 16. He desires to be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is thro' the faith of Christ.* 4y, The Gospel offers freely, not by way of Sale or Roup, any Man more bid, but by way of free Gift, *John 4. 10. If. 55. 1. Rev. 22. 17.* Even so Faith takes Christ, the poor convinced Sinner comes to him, not only as Undeserving, but as Hell-deserving, to him as the Justifier of the Ungodly, *Rom. 4. 5.* to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the Ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness, *John 1. 12.* Christ is offered in the Gospel orderly, first his Person, next his Privileges, *Rom. 8. 32. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* So the Believer first accepts of Christ in his Person and Offices, and the Result of this Match is a Title to the Portion, Heaven is no doubt very desirable, but Christ is more, *Psal. 73. 25.* 6y, Christ is offered Advisedly, as the Result of Eternal Counsel, a Project his Heart was much set upon, *Zech. 6. 13. The counsel of peace shall be between them both:* And Faith takes him Deliberately, weighing the Matter in the most serious Thoughts, for the time of Espousals is a time of much Solitude and Thoughtfulness, when the Soul counts the Cost, *Luke 14. 28.* Faith is the Result of many pretious Debates in the Soul: Encouragements and discouraging Difficulties are weighed over and over, till at length Faith turns the Scales. I must have Christ be the Terms never so hard, my Sins never so great or so many, I'll venture my Soul on him where it cannot perish: I thought out all my Thoughts, and this is the Result, Union with Christ here, or Separation from him for ever, must be my Lot; Therefore I'll accept of him to be my Sovereign and Saviour on his own Terms.

2y, Try if Christ be the Author of Faith in thee by the Fruits and Effects of it; As 1st. It purifies the heart, *Acts 15. 9. Christ dwells in our hearts by Faith,* *Ephes. 3. 17.* He keeps the House clean where he dwells, he brings with him a well of living water springing up to eternal life, *John 4. 14.* Faith is a commanding Grace, it enjoyns all the univrsal Affections to be quiet, and not to grieve the blessed Guest now under their Roof, *Song*

3. *45*, It Spiritualiseth the Soul where it is, and makes it to be of a Heavenly Disposition, 2 Peter 1. 4. Exceeding great and precious Promises are given to us, that by these we may be Partakers of the Divine Nature; Faith in and by the Promises changes the Man and makes him to be of a more Heavenly Disposition. *35*, Faith establisheth and fortifies the Heart against Tentations, 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Your Adversary the Devil is as a roaring Lion, whom resist stedfast in the Faith, the Faith of God's Holiness helped Joseph to resist the Tentation of his wanton Mistress, Gen. 39. 9. Faith defeats the Wiles of Satan and overcometh the Snares of the wicked World, 1 John 5. 9. *45*, Faith inclineth the Soul to entertain the Word of Reconciliation and God's Servants who carry the same, Mark 10. 42. *He that receives you receives me*. They be the Bridegroom's Friends, and the Bride respectfully entertains them out of Love to their Master. *55*, By sincere endeavouring to square thy Way and Walk by his Commands as the Rule; the Believer will say to the Powers of his Soul and Members of his Body, *as Mary to the Servants of the House*, John 2. 5. *Whatsoever he saith unto you do it*. *65*, In a word, Faith is never idle, it lies not at all in Head-talk and empty Profession, but in Heart-work, and is Operative in the Conversation; Galat. 5. 6. *It works by love*, it produces Love to God and to our Neighbour.

Use *51*, *Of Consolation to poor weak Believers*. 'Tis not of strong Faith only, Christ is the Author and Finisher, but of all Real Faith, were it never so weak, John 3. 16. *Who-soever believeth shall not perish*. The Exception is only against Unbelievers, Christ is the same for Pardon to strong and weak Believers, the same Bread of Life to both. He is full of Condescension, *Isai. 57. 15*. *Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the contrite ones*. If it be Objected, My Faith is so weak, that 'tis next to none, and I cannot think ever he will come under my Roof? I Answer, May be thy Faith, Believer, is far short of the Faith of some: As *1st*. It cannot cleave to God under great and comfortless Tryals, as Job's Faith did, Job 13. 15. *Thou hast slain me, yet will I trust in him*. *2^{ly}*, It cannot stir up itself to take hold of God, by such fervent wrestling in Prayer, as Jacob, Gen. 32. 24. *Hosea 12. 4*. and as Moses, Exodus Chap. 32. *3^{ly}*, Cannot be instant with God, tho' he seem to be silent not to hear Prayer; but to answer by terrible Things in Righteousness, as the *Canonized Woman*, Mat. 15. 26, 27, 28. *4^{ly}*, It cannot get over Sense and Unfitness in thy self, and look barely to God's Truth and Power, to these Promises which are all *Yea* and *Amen* in Christ, as Abraham Rom. 4. 19, 20. *Who considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb, he staggered not at the promise of God, but being strong in faith gave glory to God*. *5^{ly}*, May be thy Faith in time of great Difficulties and Want of Humane Helps, cannot cast the Care of all that concerns thee intirely upon God, as David, Psal. 27. 10. and *Jehoshaphat*, 2 Chron. 20. 12.

But to be more particular in Answering the Objection, tho' thy Faith comes not to the former Height, yet dare thou say, but it hath some of the following Ingredients; As *1st*. 'Tis mixed with Doubtings, especially under afflicting Dispensations, crying out with *Gideon*, Judges 6. 13. *If the Lord be with us, why then is all this evil befallen us?* *2^{ly}*, Tho' it cannot wrestle, but is ready to faint in Prayer; yet thy Desires are vehement, as a weak sick Man speaks low and faintly, tho' the Matter be weighty. *3^{ly}*, Thou art discouraged and disquieted with the Lord's delaying to hear and help in Distress, with the *Psalms*, Psal. 31. 21, 22. Psal. 116. 11. *4^{ly}*, Thy Faith cannot get over Sense and thy own Unfitness, which makes thee with *Sarah* laugh at the Promise, thinking it belongs not to

to thee. *2ly*, In extreme Desires after Good, or Fears of Evil, there is but little Dependence on God, but art either ready thro' Impatience to use unlawful Means, as *Rebecca* suborning *Jacob* to lie to his Father, for obtaining the Blessing she impatiently desired to him; Or thou uses Lawful Means, but trusts too much to them, as *Aha* to his Physicians, *2 Chron. 16. 12.* Now the Saints of God recorded in Scripture, have had all these Signs of weak and staggering Faith, who nevertheless had Saving Faith, and were accepted of the Lord.

If it be further *Objected*: But my Faith is so very weak, as I doubt if it be Sincere: *Answer 1st.* Be it never so weak, if it look only to the blessed Jesus for Righteousness and Salvation, tho' it be but half an Eye of Faith, compar'd with the Faith of some Worthies, yet the Danger of Ruine is over to thee. *2ly*, If thy Faith be Sincere, tho' never so weak, there will be Mourning for Unbelief, *Mark 9. 29.* This weak Faith is accepted, and benighted Unbelief is pardon'd through Christ. *3ly*, There will be serious and active Desires after the Increase of Faith, *Luke 17. 5.* Thy Errand at all Ordinances, is as a new born babe to desire the sincere milk of the word, that thou may grow thereby, *1 Pet. 2. 2.* This says, thou has got a saving Taste that the Lord is Gracious, and can receive no Satisfaction in any Duty, but in so far as the Eye of Faith is opened to discern something of God therein, and to see the King in his Beauty. This gives Ground to conclude thy Faith is Saving and will be Accepted.

So much for the first Part of this Verse, where we heard of the Duty incumbent upon us, in Order to our comfortable Through-bearing and Perseverance, that we go Looking unto Jesus, and the Object of this Look, viz. as Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our Faith.

I proceed next to what remains in the Verse.

HEBREWS XII. Verse 2. — *Who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of GOD.*

IN which Words is laid before us a Frame and Model of a Christian's Deportment, what it should be in a Time of Persecution, drawn by the perfect Hand of the blest Pattern himself. *1st*, In the blessed Example of it, which is the Sufferings of Christ, *He endured the Cross and despised the Shame*, and in this we are called to Imitate him. *2ly*, The final moving Cause in the Mind of Jesus, *for the Joy that was set before him.* This is the great Encouragement we are called to fix on in all our Sufferings, *the Joy and Glory that is set before us*, as the native Issue and Result of them. *3ly*, The Consequence of all his Sufferings, *He is set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of GOD.* He is in equal Authority, Glory and Power with God the Father, in the Rule and Government of all Things, and Eternal Glory shall be the assured Consequence of our Sufferings, *if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him, 2 Tim. 2. 12.* A few Things remain to be further cleared in these Words.

First,

First, What those Things were which Christ endured, wherein he is proposed as our Example: And they are in these words of the Text, *He endured the Cross, despising the Shame*. Pain and Shame be the two Constituents of all outward Sufferings; these were both Eminent in the Death of the Cross; no Death more lingering, painful and cruel; none so shameful in common Reputation, nor in the Thing it self: All which he patiently endur'd, which he evidenc'd not only in the holy Composure of his Soul under all his Sufferings, *Isai. 53. 7.* But during all his Torments, he neither recoil'd, reproach'd, nor threatened them with that Vengeance he might have brought on them: Yea, to his Invincible Patience he added Heroick Magnanimity; *He despised the Shame*, He did not succumb under it; Yea, he valued it not, when compared with the Glorious Effect of his Sufferings, which was always in his Eye. *Secondly*, We may enquire what this Joy was which so encouraged him? *1 Answer*, Joy is here taken for the Things wherein he did rejoyce, which he so Esteem'd and Valued, as on Account of them to endure the Cross. And this was *the Glory of God in the Salvation of the Elect*, 1. *The Glory of God*, the Accomplishment of all the Counsels of Divine Wisdom and Grace, to the Eternal Glory of God. 2. *The Salvation of the Elect World*, these were the two great Things Christ valued above Life, Honour and Reputation, and all that was dear unto him, *Isai. 53. 10, 11, 12. Hebr. 10. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.* 3ly, We shall enquire how this Joy was set before him, so as to encourage him in the Work? *Answer* 1. By the Eternal Constitution of God, whereby it was appointed, that Christ's Obedience and Sufferings shou'd be the only Means to obtain these Ends, to declare the Glory of God, and to purchase the Salvation of the Church. 2. This Joy was set before him in the Covenant of Redemption betwixt the Father and the Son, where these Things were transacted. 3. This Joy was set before him by all the Promises, Prophecies and Predictions that were given out by Divine Inspiration from the beginning of the World, *1 Peter. 1. 10, 11. Of which Salvation the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied, of the Grace that should come unto you, testifying before hand of the Sufferings of Christ, and Glory which should follow.*

From what's said we may see the Signification of the Word *arr* in this Text, tho' it commonly signifie instead of one thing for another, yet here there is no Reason to bind up our selves to the ordinary Use of the Word, when the Contexture requires another Sense not contrair thereunto: Wherefore in this place it signifies the final Cause in the Mind of Jesus for doing what he did, he did it on the Account of the Joy that was set before him.

From this part of the Text now Explain'd,

Observe 1. That our Lord Jesus encountered and bore up under Tryals and Crosses, Pain, Suffering and Shame, with Invincible Patience and Courage, and in this is set forth as our Pattern to be imitate by us.

Observe 2d. That as our Lord Jesus Christ did look to the Joy that was set before him, in order to his Encouragement under his sore Afflictions; so should Believers look to the Joy that's set before them, that they may be helped to bear up under their Cross.

Observe 3d. That our Lord Jesus is now after all his Sufferings ascended on High, and set down on the Throne of Glory.

Observe 4th. Believers who patiently after Christ's Example endure the Cross, despising the Shame, shall at last Overcome, and be set down on the Throne with him, and obtain Eternal Glory. This is from the Scope of the Text, Christ being set before us, as our Example in his Sufferings and in his Victory.

I begin with *Observe First, That our Lord Jesus encountered and bore up under Tryals, Crosses, Pain, Suffering and Shame, with Invincible Patience and Courage, and in this is set forth as our Pattern to be imitate by us.*

The Method in which I shall unfold this Doctrine, shall be 1. By giving some Considerations of the Cross, Pain and Shame Christ endured. 2. Show how we are to Imitate his Example in enduring these. 3. Propose some Directions for our right enduring the Cross and despising the Shame.

As to the *First*, Look to Jesus the Captain of our Salvation, who, the more to encourage his People under their hard Lot, came off his Throne and went before them to pave the Way; He suffered for us, leaving us an Example that we should follow his Steps. That we may lay this encouraging Copy before you, take these few particular Considerations that seem of great Moment: *As First*, Look who he was thus endured the Cross, no ordinary Person, but the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, *He being in the Form of God, thought it no Robbery, to be Equal with God: Yet being found in Fashion as a Man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross, Phil. 2. 6-8.* True it is, the Divine Nature cou'd not suffer, but the Humane Nature being Personally united to the Divine, did suffer. *Secondly*, By whom was he put to endure this Cross and this Shame? Even by Sinners, on whose Errand he came to the World! He came to save Mens Lives, and they destroyed his! *Thirdly*, Consider the Continuance of his Tryals, not for few Days, but during the whole of his Life: No sooner he ent'ed the World, but Herod lays a Trap for his Life: He was forc'd to flee to Egypt, in the Cradle *He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Griefs*; Especially after he was Baptis'd and ent'ed to the publick Exercise of his Office. How oft Malign'd, Tempted, Slandered, Persecuted, Hated, Hunted, till at length Arraign'd, Condemn'd and Kill'd. *Fourthly*, Look to what Crosses he endured; It was not one kind of Trouble and Affliction, he was exercised with all Sorts, *He hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting, but gave his Back to the Smilers, and Cheeks to them that pluck'd off the Hair, Isai. 50. 6.* He suffered Hunger, Thirst, Weariness, Poverty; He was Apprehended, Imprisoned, Accused, Condemn'd, Scourg'd and Crucified. *Fifthly*, Beside all this, in his Body and Name; look to his Soul-sufferings when in the Garden, *Matth. 26. 38, 39. His Soul was exceeding Sorrowful even unto Death*; So that he cryed, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me*; Which shews the Vehemency of that Pressure under which he lay, when about to engage that Bloody Combat with the Wrath of God, and to drink that gall'd Cup where was the Curse of the Law because of Sin, and all from the Hand of his Father, *He bruised him, and put him to grief, Isai. 53. 10.* He hid his Face from him, so as he cryed, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* *Sixthly*, Think how little External Comfort of Friends he had all this time, while sweating great Drops of Blood in an Agony, he could not prevail with his Disciples to watch one Hour with him: He was apprehended by the Treachery of one of his Disciples, and the rest forsook him and fled; Peter denyed him thrice, his beloved Disciple John stood afar off dejected and broken Hearted, Mary his Mother durst not come near him: When the Shepherd was smitten, the Sheep were scattered. *Seventhly*, Consider how Innocent was he who endur'd the Cross, he was Holy, Harmless, Undeild, Separate from Sinners, *Hebr. 7. 26. He had done no Violence, neither was Deceit found in his Mouth.* By all their false Witnesses they could not convince him of the least Sin. The Causes of his Sufferings, as to Man, why he was Judged and Condemned, were glorious fundamental Truths, as the affirming he was the Son of God, and that he was a King, tho' his Kingdom not of this World, and

so not inconsistent with *Cesar's*: *Eligibly*, Think what a Death he endured, the Death of the Cross; not a simple but a multiplied Death, being most painful, tormenting and lingering, every Nail brought a Death with it; it was most Shameful, crucified naked with a chief Malefactor, hung up betwixt two Thieves: And it was a cursed Death, for the Law saith, *Cursed is he that hangerh on a Tree*, Deut. 21. 23: *He became a Curse for us*, Galat. 3. 13. *Amazingly*, Consider with what Invincible Patience and Courage he endured all this. *When reviled he reviled not again, as a Sheep before the Shearer is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth*: All the Blows of Justice and Barbarity from Men, never drew one impatient Word from his gracious Lips. When the wretched Souldiers did spit on his Face, put a Crown of Thorns on his Head, and a Fool's Coat on his Back; when they buffeted him, hood-wink'd him, and mock'd him, all he said was, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do*.

Secondly, I am to shew how we are to imitate Christ's Example in enduring the Cross and despising the Shame: And 1. Consider, that Christ being Infinitely above us, and yet thus put on the Rack, there is no Room left for us to grudge or complain of Affliction, if it be our Lot, *Is the Disciple above his Master*? Shall I think it strange and uncouth, when the Captain of my Salvation was made perfect, thro' Sufferings, tho' I fall under Affliction, Tentation and Tribulation? No, I'll go looking to *Jesus who endured the Cross, despising the Shame*. 2ly, So little Cause have we to complain, that rather we have Ground to Wonder and Praise we are so Mercifully dealt with, he hath pity-ed us, and considered we are but brittle Dust soon crush'd, and therefore laid the heavy End of the Cross on Christ, and met us out only a few lighter Touches of it: O unworthy me to be clap'd with so gentle a Hand, when lo the Prince of Life was press'd on the Rack, till Blood squis'd from his Heart! And shall I grudge and repine? No, I'll go through my Furnace of Affliction, *Looking to Jesus who endured the Cross, despising the Shame*. 3ly, Whatsoever Crosses or Afflictions fall to our Share, Christ has taken the weight out of them, he endured them before you, the Sting and Venom, the Curse is away: Therefore you may with the Apostle call them, *a light affliction that is but for a moment*, 2 Cor. 4. 18. Christ hath sweetned your Passage through them all, so as now they can neither hurt nor harm you: Say therefore I'll not grudge, but go on Imitating Jesus. 4ly, The blessed Jesus who was thus put to it himself, knows how to pity and sympathize with such as succeed him in this Lot, he knows what it is to be thus Exercised, and what this requires and stands in need of, what cordial Support will be most proper for his Saints; *We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all Points tempted like as we are*, Heb. 4. 15. Say therefore, I'll follow Jesus, *enduring the Cross, despising the Shame*. 5ly, Consider some special Ingredients in Christ's Cup that may answer some Perplexities in yours, while in an afflicted Lot, and this may silence Murmurings against God. As 1. May some of you say, I'm innocent as to what's laid to my Charge, I'm expos'd and toss'd by Men without a Cause; So was thy suffering Lord, therefore lay thy Hand upon thy Mouth. 2. Thy nearest Friends turn their back on thee, had not Christ the same to wrestle with, *all forsook him and fled*. 3. External Trouble and inward Desertion trifle upon thee at once, look to Jesus in the same Case, even while within a few Minutes of giving up the Ghost, he crys, *My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?* In thy Case is but Fatherly With-drawing, but Christ had the weight of the Wrath of God due to the whole Elect World to grapple with when he was deserted. 4. Thou complains, My Trouble is of long Duration, but did not Christ continue his whole Life-time, his Cross followed him from his Cradle to his Grave; If it be further

Objection, These Things, I dare not deny, are notable Encouragements, to go enduring the Cross; but there is something Extraordinary in my Case, tis not like the Cross of others! The *Answer* of this leads me to what

I propos'd in the third Place for opening the Doctrine; Namely, to give some Directions how to *endure the Cross, and despise the Shame*.

Tho' Directions of this kind be necessary to all, yet at this Occasion I shall specially take Notice of such who complain their Cross is Singular, crying out, *All ye that pass by, behold and see if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, how can I endure it?* For your Direction, I shall 1. Premise a few Considerations. 2. Answer some Particulars make your Case appear Singular. 3. Shew there is little Ground for your Complaints and Out-cries. 4. Shew a far better Way of Improving Afflictions than by complaining of them, where I may drop some Advices how to Improve them, so as to prevent Murmuring.

And *First*, I premise these Considerations, 1. 'Tis a thing usually Incident to every one under their Afflictions to reckon their Case Singular; Because every one feels that best that's nearest to himself, being more sensible of what pains and troubles himself, than of the pain of others. 2. Consider every Person's Complexion and Constitution is not alike easie to work upon, a small Salve will cure one, while another's Wound must be deep Launc'd and Scarify'd: Wilt thou complain of a Physician, because he suits the Physick to thy Maladie? Rather judge, it seems my peccant Humors are more than ordinary. 3. This will serve further to display the Wisdom of God in guiding so many Sons and Daughters home to Glory, through so many Kinds of Tryals, Exercises, Afflictions and Tentations: How will this raise their Notes higher in Glory, when every one beside their wond'ring at the great Work of Redemption common to them all, have each something peculiar to himself, raising their Admiration? Every one will have Ground to say, as *Mark 7. 37. He hath done all things well*. Well to pull Husband, Wife, Children, out of my Arms, my Estate from me, my Life from me, to bring me to Heaven at a Stake, at a Fire, or a Gibbet, all is done well. 4. What if as to these Particulars wherein you think your Case Singular, it be otherways? Can you say you are thoroughly acquaint with all the Providences of God in all Ages? If not; why speak you so Inconsiderately? 5. But be it so as you alledge, yet believe you not in whose Hand you are? His *who heals the broken in Heart, and tenderly binds up all their Wounds*, who sits at the side of your Furnace, and will not cast in one Grain more than shall effectuate your Cure: Should not this cause you forget your Complaints? 6. The People of God, while in the Furnace, would not be taken always at their word, every thing they say, would not be held for certain, *Job* had many Expressions in that Condition, which he would not own afterwards.

Secondly, I shall answer some Particulars that make your Case appear Singular: *First*, Some say, *In my Case deep calls to deep, his waves and billows pass over me*, I'm distracted with his Terrors from my Youth up, my Life is wholly made up of Tentations and Tossings. *Answer* 1. May it not be thought you may bear them the better you have been so accustomed with them? 2. You're in the wrong to think you're Singular even in this, see one beyond you, *Psal. 88. 15. I am afflicted and ready to die, while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted*. 3. In Re-counting thy Case, thy Turnings and Wyndings, is there never a word of Encouragement? Is there not some Advantage gained thereby? Never a Song in the Furnace! Can you not sometimes say, *Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me*, *Psal. 42. 8.*

2ly, Some may alledge my Foot was never within the School-door of Affliction before, and therefore now the Cross is more terrible, I cannot endure it: *Answer* 1. 'Tis probable 'tis so much the worse for you. 2. It becomes you rather to Reason thus, I'll bear it more patiently, that hitherto the Lord hath been so tender of and gentle to me. 3. In a word, your language comes to this; So perverse are our Hearts, none of God's Dispensations can please us, every Body is better satisfied with anothers Lot than their own. 4. However, thy Case is not Singular, for it was Job's, Chap. 16. 12. *I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder; he hath also taken me by the neck and shaken me in pieces.*

3ly, Others may pretend, My Cross is the heaviest that ever was endured: *Answer* 1. Readily none will look on their own as lightest. 2. Lay it in the Ballance, and see it Out-weighed, 2 Cor. 1. 8. *We were pressed out of measure above strength, in so much that we despaired even of life.* Rev. 7. 14. *They came out of great tribulation.*

4ly, Others may cry, My Cross consists of many Complications; none ever so visited. *Answer*, Need I go further than Job to confute this Singularity; Art thou of a rich Man made poor? So was he. Has thou been robbed of all thy pleasant Children? So was he, deprived of seven Sons and three Daughters all in an Hour, and after an unusual manner, he never saw them die, nor got a word of them before they died; See his groaning Case, Job 19. 8—28. Read Paul's Affliction, 2 Cor. 11. 23—28. Who can say his Crosses are parallel to these? Away then with Complaints of a matchless Case.

5ly, Some plead, My Friends and nearest Relations; Yea, even these come of my own Bowels are the Ground of my Cross. *Answer*, But was not Christ so served, and Paul 1 Cor. 11. 26. and David Psal. 55. 12, 13. and Job by his Friends, Domesticks, and Neighbours; Yea, his own Wife bids him curse God and die: Was not old Eli and Aaron afflicted by their wicked Sons.

6ly, Others say, No Sorrow like my Sorrow, it comes from an odd Source; Namely, from sober, not from wicked and profane Persons; Yea, from such as seem to have Grace. *Answer*, Were not Job's Friends such tho' mistaken in their Application to him? Paul and Barnabas were so serv'd at Antioch, Acts 13. 50. Devout and honourable Women, and the chief Men of the City, raised Persecution against them; and expelled them out of the City.

Lastly, Serious Souls may plead, This is my Distress, I have had many Crosses from very sad Causes, and of as heavy a Nature as I heard yet, but all this is not my heaviest Cross; but this, That I'm afraid my Affliction is not sanctified to me, it hath not yet produced the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness. To this I *Answer*, I confess this is the great Question under the Cross to a serious Soul; But 1. It looks well thou'rt thus Exercised, it speaks out a Principle of Spiritual Life in thee. 2. Try by the following Genuine Evidences of a Sanctified Cross; As 1. Can thou say that by this thine Eye was lifted up to the Hand that struck thee, and cast down again to thy own Heart, as the Cause that procured it, this makes thee silent and say, *Tis the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* And, *We are the for I have sinned;* my Folly hath made it so. Then Meats come out of the Easter to thee. 2. A Sanctified Cross drives the Soul near God, *Before affliction I was astray, but now I have kept thy word,* Psal. 119. 71. As Natural Spirits in a Body retire Inward, and get close to the Heart in cold stormy Weather, so Believers are nearest God in times of Danger and Tentation, as David Psal. 46. 3. *What time I am afraid I will trust in thee.* 3. An Earthly Carnal Set of Heart is worn off, thy Heart

weaned.

weaned, and Affections crucified to the World; *How looks you to the things which are seen, which are temporal, but to the things which are not seen, which are Eternal; 2 Cor. 4. 18.*
 4. A sanctified Affliction draws Grace forth to Exercise; Tribulation works Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope. 5. Thy Diligence is quickened in the Use of the Means of Grace and Duties of Holiness, to all which thou was backward in the Day of Prosperity. 6. Affliction raises fervent Pantings and Longings after Heaven and Glory above, when God strips us of our most pleasant Comforts, snatches the fairest Flowers out of our Hands; O then what Breathings after God, the Light of his Countenance, and Manifestation of his Love, *Psal. 42. 1, 2, 3. Psal. 63. 1, 2, 3.* When Earth is gone, Heaven is welcome, when the Creature is gone, Christ is sweet. These are Tokens of a sanctified Cross, if thou find them, there is no Ground to complain.

Thirdly, I am further to prove, that upon serious Consideration, there is no Ground for your Complaints and Out-cries: And 1. Others whose Lot have been more un-bittered, have been discharged thus to Complain; *Lament. 3. 39. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?* 2. Peter 4. 12. *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened you, think not God is taking any uncouth or unheard of Course.* 2. Many have drunk deeper of that Cup of Gall; Yea, your Sufferings are not comparable to what others of the Lord's Worthies have been exercised with, and what Ground is there for Complaining? 3. Could you ever compare with David a man according to God's heart, or with Job who was perfect and upright, fearing God and shunning evil? If not, there is no Ground of your Complaint, when he is dealing no worse with you than with them; Yea, in a more mild manner. 4. What if it be found, that these who have been more heavily exercised, have not so provoked God by complaining as you have done.

Fourthly, I shall shew you a better Way of improving Afflictions, than by complaining of them; Yea, drop a few Directions how to improve them, so as to prevent Murmuring: Now, if you would endure the Cross patiently after Christ's Example, First, Be Conscientious in the Practice of Consideration, *Exod. 7. 19. In the day of adversity consider,* think on what our Lord hath endured for us, and what our Sins have deserved: The want of this Consideration is charged as a heavy Guilt, *Jerem. 9. 33. Thou hast stricken, but they have not grieved.* Therefore consider, 1. The Vanity of the Creature; when God takes away our dearest Relations, think what vain things they are, in which we promise our selves so much Comfort and Content: How soon they wither, one Stroke from God separates betwixt us and them, and then they are gone, and our Eyes see them no more; All Flesh is Grass, all Creature-Enjoyments are withering Grass. 2. Consider the Evil of Sin; 'tis the only Source and Cause of all these Calamities. 3. That God's End and Design in all these Tryals is for thy good; 4. That God is of a gracious Disposition toward his People in all their Crosses, that he chastens but of love, as a father doth a child; *Heb. 12. 6. Deuter. 8. 5.* That he is afflicted in all your afflictions; *Isai. 63. 9.* 5. Consider how he moderates and mitigates all thy Tryals, *He debates in measure, he stays his rough wind in the day of his east wind, Isai. 27. 8.* He preserves thee from sinking, *2 Cor. 4. 8, 9. We are troubled on every side, but not distressed, we are persecuted, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed.* Direction 2d. Be Silent before the Lord, for he hath put you to Silence, do not Mourn, Quarrel, nor fret, but the more he afflicts draw the nearer to him, and love him the more; *Lam. 3. 28. 33. Justifie God in all his Dealings with thee, Psal. 43. 4. I have done evil in thy sight, that thou may be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.* Do not

Hebrews XII. Verse 2.

85

not charge God foolishly, if thou do thus, thou shalt accept of the Punishment of thine Iniquity, and be helped to endure. 4y, Search your Hearts and try your Ways, *Lam. 3. 40.* find out the *Achan*, the beloved *Dalila*, say, What have I done? What Sins have I committed, what Duties have I omitted to provoke the Lord? 5y, Pour out your Hearts to God in Prayer, this is our Relief under the Cross, *James 5. 13.* *Is any Man afflicted, let him pray:* Pray for suffering and enduring Graces, Faith and Patience. 6y, If thou find out any particular Evil for which God contends in afflicting thee, then be sure by all Means you break off that by speedy Repentance and Reformation, otherwise you frustrate the very End of God's Chastisement. 7y, Give up your whole Heart to God in Christ, this is God's End in removing Comforts, because they proved Hindrances of God's Access to your Soul: Now he calls, Soul, I dispossessed these Rooms of thy Heart and Affections of other things, that I may enjoy them alone, therefore let me have them. I proceed to

Observe 1. *This is our Lord Jesus Christ did look to the Joy that was set before him, in order to his Encouragement under his sore Afflictions; so should Believers look to the Joy that is set before them, that they may be helped to bear up under their Cross:*

To prepare this Doctrine for your Use, I shall, 1. Shew what was that Joy to which Christ did look, in order to his Encouragement under sore Afflictions: 2y, What is that Joy Believers may look to for their Support in an afflicted Lot. 3y, What is included in looking to this Joy set before them. 4y, Why it is their Duty thus to look to it.

First, What was that Joy to which Christ did look in order to his Encouragement under his sore Sufferings? Now, as it was before hinted in explaining the Text, the Joy set before him is taken for the things wherein he did Rejoice, these glorious Promises made to him in the Covenant of Redemption, in the prospect of his finishing this blessed Work, which he so esteemed and valued, as cheerfully to endure the Cross. More particularly, 1. He rejoiced in the Gathering and Conversion of a glorious Church, both of Jews and Gentiles, that they should be plucked out of Satans Kingdom, and made Heirs of eternal Glory by the Vertue of his Purchase. *When the seventy Disciples returned, and told the Devils are subject to us through thy Name, in that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit.* *Luke 10. 17, 21.* There was a glorious Enlargement of the Church promised to the Honour of the Mediator in the Days of the Gospel, *Gen. 42. 10.* *Isa. 42. 6.* *Chap. 49. 6.* *Chap. 54. 1, 2, 3.* *Psal. 2. 8.* *Mal. 1. 11.* and when Christ did see these Promises hastning to be accomplished, no doubt he greatly rejoiced. 2y, Christ rejoiced that his Ministry was useful to the Souls of some poor People: It was Prophesied of him, *A bruised Reed he shall not break, a smoking Flax he shall not quench.* *Isa. 42. 3.* And in the Days of his Humiliation he rejoiced in Spirit, saying, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things from the Wise and Prudent, and revealed them unto Babes.* 3y, He rejoiced in his Father's assisting and supporting him in the whole of his Mediatorial Work, this was promised, *Isa. 42. 1.* *Psal. 80. 17.* *Psal. 89. 21.* and this Assistance he experienced while in a state of Humiliation, *John 8. 28. 20.* This was the Joy that encouraged him in his sore Sufferings. 4y, He rejoiced in that his Father was well pleased with him, and accepted him in all that he did. *Jesus calls our Mediator in that 42 Chap. of Isa. v. 1.* *My Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth.* This was confirmed to him by a Voice from Heaven, *Matth. 3. 17.* *Thus is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* Our blessed Lord delighted to do his Father's Will, *Psal. 40. 8.* *Heb. 10. 7.* this encouraged

couraged him cheerfully and patiently to undergo the greatest Agony, *Matth. 26. 38.* 5y, Christ rejoiced in the Offices and Trusts were put upon him as our Mediator. *That the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, the Lord had anointed him to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, Luke 4. 18.* That he was to purchase Souls by the Sacrifice of himself. *(saith he) I have a Baptism to be baptized with, how am I straitened till it be accomplished? Luke 12. 50.* He rejoiced in reigning over his People. he rode to Jerusalem in Triumph, that it might be fulfilled which was written by the Prophet, *Tell the Daughter of Zion, behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, sitting upon an Ass, and a Colt the Foal of an Ass, Matth. 21. 4. 5.* He rejoiced in the great Measure of the Spirit given to him, even as Man, in that fulness of Grace given to him, and from him communicable to all his People. 6y, The Glory that was bestowed upon our Mediator was ground of Joy and Encouragement to him in all his fore Sufferings: He is named the Saviour, *Luke 19. 10. Emmanuel, God with us, Matth. 1. 23. The Mediator, 1 Tim. 2. 5. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the World, Rev. 13. 8. The King of kings, and Lord of lords, Rev. 19. 16. The chief of ten Thousands, and altogether Lovely, Song 5. 16. Yea, he hath a Name above every Name, Phil. 2. 9. And all Judgment is committed to him, John 5. 22.* He hath also a peculiar Glory in Heaven, *He hath a Throne there, Rev. 22. 13. He hath a peculiar Song of Praise there, Rev. 5. 9. Thou art worthy to take the Book, and open the Seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation: Yea, he hath a Throne and a Kingdom to give to each of his redeemed Ones, Luke 12. 32. Rev. 3. 21.* 7y, Christ rejoiced, that by his Humiliation and Sufferings God was glorified, *John 17. 4. I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finished the Work thou gavest me so do.* God's Wisdom was glorified in reconciling the different Pleas of Mercy and Justice; Mercy was glorified in pardoning the Sinner; Justice in punishing the Cautioner; Power, in making the gates of Hell fall by such weak Means: Patience in waiting on Sinners relenting and repenting; and God's Love and Kindness could never have so appeared, as by sending the Son of his Love to die for us: God's Power could have made many Worlds, but his Love could go no higher as this. *He so loved the World, as he gave his own only begotten Son, John 3. 16.* By this blessed Work the distinct Persons of the undivided Trinity have a peculiar Glory, the Father in sending the Son, intrusting, qualifying, assisting, and setting him apart for this Work: The Son in taking on our Nature, living a humbled Life, and dying a cursed Death to purchase our Salvation: And the Holy Spirit in anointing Christ with these Offices necessary for the Execution of his Mediatorial Work, in pouring out all Gifts and Graces on his humane Nature, assisting him in the Work, and in sanctifying and applying his Purchase to all the Elec^t for whom it was designed. *Lastly, Christ rejoiced in the glorious Triumph he was to receive as the Fruit of his enduring the Cross and despising the Shame, Isa. 53. 12. Therefore will I divide him a Portion with the great, and he shall divide the Spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his Soul to Death.* The result of his blessed Purchase was, that he should set up an universal and everlasting Kingdom in the World, that he should rise from the Dead, ascend up on High, lead Captivity captive, give Gifts to Men, trail Satan, Hell, Death and the Grave as Prisoners in Chains after his triumphal Chariot, that he should sit on the Throne of Glory, governing his Church at his sole Pleasure, till all the Elec^t be brought home to Glory, that then he should judge the World, condemn his Enemies to everlasting Chains, and he and his Saints Reign in everlasting Blessedness; World without end, Amen.

Secondly,

Secondly, I proposed to shew, what is that Joy Believers may look to for their Support in their afflicted Lot. Now this is partly begun, here, Believers taste of it under the Cross, *Psal. 42. 8. All thy Waves and thy Billows are gone over me; yet the Lord will command his loving Kindness in the Day time, and in the Night his Song shall be with me.* Such Songs had *Ezekiel* at the River *Chebar*, and *John* in *Patmos*: It is true all these are inconsiderable, when compared to that Joy and these Pleasures which are at his right Hand for evermore, which we are called to fix our Faith on, under the Cross. Yet I may give you a Taste of this Joy that is to be enjoyed in this Life; 1. You may rejoice that God is engaged to be for you, that you have Communion with him, and Experiences of his hearing your Prayers, pardoning your Sins, enlarging your Souls, relieving you in Straits, and helping you when brought Low. 2d. You may have Joy in marrying and matching with precious Christ; it is true, the Betrothing time is only here, the full Consummation is above, yet this breeds sweet ravishing Joy, thy Maker is thy Husband; O blest Fellow and Helper in Crosses, to know him living in us, to have Fellowship with him in his Death and Resurrection; to receive of his Fulness Grace for Grace, what Joy springs from this Fountain! 3d. Joy arises from the rich Influences of the Spirit of Grace, mortifying Sin, quickning Grace, assisting in Duty, and comforting in Distress; these are the Waters which spring up to eternal Life, the natural Man cannot discern them, Strangers interrupt us not with this Joy, it is the hidden Manna. 4th. You may have Joy from the hidden Mysteries of the Gospel, which are hid from the Wise and Prudent, and revealed unto Babes, *Matth. 11. 25.* They can with Joy draw Water out of these Wells of Salvation, *Jsa. 12. 3.* They find a sweet enlightning, quickning, transforming, nourishing, and comforting Power and Vertue of the Gospel. 5th. The Joy of the Promises is set before Believers under the Cross, the Sweetness, Good, and Comfort of them are invisible to carnal Eyes, but Believers live richly on the Promises, *God hath spoken in his Holiness, I will rejoice;* they are suited to all your Conditions and Distresses, and sometimes spoke home with Power to your Hearts, to be a Seal of Christ's Love, and to assure you of your Interest in him, *Eph. 1. 13.* these are but dry Breasts to unrenewed Hearts, but full to Believers.

But not only have Believers a Joy that is to be enjoyed in this Life, which they may look to for their Support under the Cross; but also great is the inward Joy set before them who endure patiently, in that Vision of God, that Kingdom of Heaven, that Crown of Glory which God hath proposed since the beginning of the World, and Christ hath purchased by his own Blood. This Joy Men nor Angels cannot utter, it is indeed Joy unspeakable and full of Glory: Look to it for your Encouragement under the Cross, it will arise, 1. From the Fellowship and Society of the Saints; if the Society of the Saints, the excellent Ones in the Earth be so very sweet under all their Imperfections and Infirmities, as the Lord tells, *Psal. 16. 2. Mal. 3. 16.* O what Joy shall arise from it when they will be adorned and beautified with all Grace and Holiness in the Fulness and Perfection, what a joyful little Heaven must their Company alone be! 2d. Joy will arise from Converse with Angels, the most high, noble and excellent of all God's Creatures; while we carry this lumpy Tabernacle about with us, we are scarce capable of Communion with such spiritual heavenly Creatures; but at Death Believers shall begin their Communion with them, *Heb. 12. 22.* Then these triumphant Chariots shall carry their departed Souls, with Shouts and Acclamations of Joy unto the Presence of God, where they shall joy together in high Praises of him for evermore. 3d. Joy will arise from a Sight and Enjoyment of lovely Jesus, who there

With our Children, from allowing them to have more of our Hearts than God, Christ, Heaven and Salvation; the Cross teaches us to give Christ the chief Room in our Souls, to mortify Sin, and to have the Graces of the Holy Spirit in Exercise, as Repentance, Faith, Hope and Patience: This lays Foundation for spiritual Joy, and to you who are thus exercised, the Lord hath promised, *John 16. 22. Ye now have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your Hearts shall rejoice, and your Joy no Man shall take from you: 2 Cor. 4. 17. Our light Affliction which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.*

Use 1. of Information. If looking to this Joy will support under Crosses, then there is an absolute Necessity we have a distinct Knowledge and Persuasion of the Excellency and Reality of these eternal Consolations, without this we can neither mind, nor set our Hearts on them.

Inference 2. Hence see a Necessity of having an Interest in these Joys, let us embrace Christ, and then all is ours, *1 Cor. 3. 22. Try your Interest by Scripture Rules, Rom. 8. 1. — There is no Condemnation is them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit. If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his: 2 Cor. 4. 17. If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature.*

Inference 3. Hence see the true Cause of your Despondency under Crosses, you look not to the Joy set before you; they who believe not the Crown, can never comfortably bear the Cross, *But if we cheerfully suffer with him, we may hope to be glorified together with him, Rom. 8. 17.*

Inference 4. Hence appears the Misery of Unbelievers, what can support them when without Interviews of these Joys; for part they must with all they enjoy, and then they have no Title to God, Heaven or Happiness, but the dreadful Terror of everlasting Wrath abiding them.

Inference 5. Hence appears the Mischief of earthly Mindedness, this hinders our Comfort and Support under the Cross: Therefore avoid this inordinate minding of earthly Things, it is contrair to God's Command, *Colos. 3. 2. For we be heaven and born of God, James 1. 17. 18. And will you debase your heavenly Original by minding earthly Things? If you be real Saints, you have a Right to an invisible and eternal Life, Colos. 3. 3. Your chief Hope is grounded on these Joys set before you, 1 Cor. 15. 19: If in this Life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all Men most miserable, Rom. 3. 2. We rejoice in hope of the Glory of God. All your other Actions here are in order to your Fruition of these future Joys, and not for any Reward in this Life, Rom. 2. 7. Gal. 6. 8. All our dearest and best Relations are above, our God, our Redeemer, and all our precious Associates. Therefore set not your Heart on earthly Enjoyments, but upon these heavenly Joys set before you.*

Use 2. Of Exhortation. Would you endure your Cross patiently, then steadfastly fix your Eyes on these lasting Joys set before you, into which all your Crosses shall at last resolve; labour to live in the believing View and Prospect of them.

If you ask, How shall I be helped to do this? For your Direction I give these Advices, First, Observe God in all your Mercies, for he is your Life, and the Author of Life and of all the Comforts of Life, the Power and Vertue comes from him, *In him we live, move, and have our being.* Therefore look to and acknowledge God with Heart and Tongue to be the Author and Giver of every Mercy you enjoy; this will make every Crumb sweet and pleasant, a Dinner of Herbs, Barley Bread and cold Water with the Love of God, will be a rich Feast: If you say, That is my Question, may I conclude these

these to be from the Love of God. *Answer.* You may conclude for this by a hearty practical Acknowledgement you owe God's Propriety in them all. *Gen. 22. 14.* Who are these with thee? (asks *Esau*, *Jacob* answers) The Children which God hath graciously given thy Servant; all we have is but lent to us, and we Tenants at Will. 2ly, When Mercies draw out your Love to God, and build and fasten our Hearts closer to him. 3ly, When you improve and imploy them all for God, your Health, Ease, Liberty and all for him. 4ly, If you be willing to part with them all on God's Call, this is none to love any thing above God, or in Competition with him, nor in Separation from him. He who loves any thing in the World otherwise, the Love of the Father is not in him, 1. John 2. 14, 15. but he who loves outward Mercies thus, may enjoy them with the Love of God.

Advice 2. Live on God in the use of all your Mercies; not the Creature, but God in the Creature we must love and live upon; the Creature should not satiate us without some Sense of God's Love in it, a great Question, but seldom asked: But if we acted thus, we should eminently be supported under all Crosses, this would eat out the Gall and Wormwood of our Cross, namely inordinate Love to the Creature; by this we may begin our Heaven upon Earth, for this is the very Happiness of Heaven to be ay with God in view of these eternal Joys: Yea this is the way to lose nothing of all our earthly Comforts; for what we lose in the Creature, we make up in the Creator.

Advice 3. Relinquish up your Will to God intirely under all Crosses. O choice Spirit! when all Self-respects are drowned in the Will of God, in this there is no Hazard, for his Will is infinitely better than ours; Submission to it brings us to solid Peace and Comfort, *Psal. 37. 5. 6. Prov. 16. 3.* Consider that God hath absolute Dominion over, and Propriety in all things, *We unto him that strive with his Maker: Let the Postward strive with the Postwards of the Earth, Isa. 45. 9.* In all God's Dispensations, he hath Righteousness to be the Line, were they never so bitter, *Psal. 145. 17.* he is faithful in all his Chastisements, by them he is only making way to perform his Promises to us, *Psal. 119. 75.* His Mercy and Compassion is boundless, *Exod. 34. 6.* and he is Omnipotent and Allsufficient to supply his People under all their Afflictions, *Gen. 17. 1.* This may make us fear him who hath Power to cast us into Hell, *Luke 12. 5.* and may encrease Trust and Confidence in him, *Psal. 9. 10.*

Advice 4. In order to your Support and Comfort under all your Afflictions, aim at Communion with God in all Duties, and Conformity to him in all your Actions. In order to this, 1. Labour for Purity of Heart, for they only shall see God, but if you regard Iniquity in your Hearts, it is impossible to enjoy Communion with a holy God. 2ly, Get and keep up Heart-brokenness and Contrition for Sin, with such God hath promised to dwell, *Isa. 57. 15.* 3ly, Be upright in Heart, *The Lord is near to them that call upon him in Truth, Psal. 145. 18.* 4ly, Be heavenly in thy Walk and Conversation, *Phil. 3. 20.* 5ly, Be much in actings of Faith, Love, Hope and Joy in the Lord, in the Exercise of these Graces his People enjoy him. 6ly, Keep your Heart with all Diligence, *Prov. 4. 23.* that you grieve not, quench not, resist not the holy Spirit of God, for by his Influences God communicates himself to your Souls, carefully therefore observe his Motions, and ask his Assistance to all your Duties. Lastly, If you would maintain Communion with God, which is our Heaven upon Earth, look well to your whole Conversation that it be ordered aright, for to such only God will shew his Salvation, *Psal. 50. 23.* I proceed now to

Doctrine 3d. Our blessed Lord Jesus after all his Sufferings, is now ascended on high, and set down on the Throne of Glory. From a mean and low Condition, he is possessed of a most glorious and happy State, no more without Form and Beauty; No, he out-shines Sun, Moon and Stars: He is no more contemn'd and despis'd as the Carpenter's Son, but highly renowned, and hath a Name above every Name, Phil. 2. 9. At which every knee shall bow: No more a Servant of Servants, but a glorious Conqueror.

I shall First prove the Truth of this Doctrine. Secondly, Give some Reasons why it is so. Thirdly, Apply the Whole.

First, The Truth of this Doctrine is evident, 1st. From God's Promise, Psal. 110. 1. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool. 2^{ly}, This was prophesied of Christ, Psal. 16. 10, 11. Psal. 68. 18. Thou has ascended on high, Thou has led captivity captive, thou has received gifts for Men. 3^{ly}, It was typified by the high Priest under the Law, Heb. 9. 7. compared with verse 24. Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the Figures of the True, but into Heaven is self, now to appear in the presence of GOD for us. 4^{ly}, Christ himself prayed for it, John 17. 5. Now O Father glorifie thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the World was. 5^{ly}, Our Lord was assured of it, and foretold it to his Disciples, John 20. 17. Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and so my God and your God. 6^{ly}, A Cloud of Witnesses testifie him to be there: The Angels confirm it, Acts 1. 10, 11. Two men in white apparel said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing, the same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner. The Apostles also attest it, Acts 1. 9. When he had spoke these things while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Secondly, I am to give Reasons why our Lord Jesus after all his Sufferings ascended and sat down on the Throne of Glory: As 1st, To repair his Glory, which was overclouded by his enduring the Cross, Phil. 2. 9, 10, 11. He humbled himself and became obedient to the death, even the death of the cross; Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name. He is now exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins. According to his Divine Nature, he had all Honour from Eternity, but he is now also exalted as God-Man Mediator: The very Angels worship him, and run his Errands, Heb. 1. 6—14. And the Saints worship and serve him cheerfully, and sing his Praise as true God in our Nature. 2^{ly}, Christ did sit down on a Throne of Glory, that he might triumph over all his subdued Enemies, Satan, Sin, Death, Hell, and the Grave, Psal. 68. 18. Thou has ascended on high, thou has led captivity captive, Ephes. 4. 8. He sits till all his Enemies be made his Footstool, Psal. 110. 5. till he see his Victory fully execute in their total and final Overthrow. 3^{ly}, Our Lord sits in Glory, to be a glorified Head to guide and govern his Church and People, he has appointed who shall be Ministers and Office-Bearers in his House, Eph. 4. 11, 12. He hath ordained Sacraments for his New Testament Church, Matth. 28. 19, 20. 1 Cor. 11. 23. He has directed his Servants how to execute Discipline, Matth. 18. 16—19. He has promised and bestows his Blessing upon the Dispensations of the Gospel, Matth. 18. 20. Every Pin of his House is ordered by his Sovereign Hand. It's also a Fruit of his Ascension and sitting at the Father's Right Hand, that he sends his blessed Spirit with all Influences of Light, Life, Protection and Direction, to guide his People through this weary Wilderness home to Glory, John 16. 7—14. Well may he then be called the Head of his Church, Ephes. 1. 22. Let us depend on him for good to his Church, and guiding us through all difficult Steps in our way, till we Land at Glory.

Glory. 1^{ly}, He sits in Glory, that he may be our Fore-runner, that he may take Possession of it in our Name, as our Head and Representative, Heb. 6. 20. That he might prepare this Place for us, John 14. 3. O bless him for it, and look to him to prepare you for these Mansions of Glory. From this Note take

One Use of Consolation to Believers. Is our Lord Jesus Christ ascended and set on the Throne of Glory? Then comfort ye, comfort ye my People, 1st. Against all your Guilt, Rom. 8. 33, 34. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.* He appears as the Lamb slain presenting the Merits of his Death, Revel. 5. 6. 2^{ly}, Comfort against all Satan's Accusations, tho' he be the Accuser of the Brethren, which accuseth them before our God Day and Night, Rev. 12. 10. Yet our blessed Advocate says, *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord who hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* Zech. 3. 2. 3^{ly}, Tho' the Law minister Wrath, yet here is Comfort, the Ark where the Law is kept is covered with the Mercy-Seat, whereby Christ is signified, *who hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,* Gal. 3. 13. 4^{ly}, Tho' the Accusations of Conscience be very heavy, as we may learn from the Experience of many Saints recorded, Psal. 38. 51—58. yet here is a Remedy, *The blood of sprinkling speaks better things than that of Abel,* Heb. 12. 24. *Since we have such a high Priest, let us draw near with a full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.* 5^{ly}, Comfort against the Fear of Temptations; when the Messenger of Satan came to buffet Paul, what supported him? *My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness,* 2 Cor. 12. 9. The same Relief may any poor Believer now find. *For Christ himself hath suffered, being tempted, that he may be able to succour them who are tempted,* Heb. 2. 18. 6^{ly}, Here is Comfort under the Sense of Weakness in Duties, our Lord hath promised the Spirit to help our Infirmities, Rom. 8. 26. And he offers the Prayers of the Saints with much Incense, *And the smoke of the incense which came up, with the prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God,* Revel. 8. 3. The Merits of Christ's Intercession makes the imperfect Prayers of his People to be accepted. 7^{ly}, Here is Comfort against Fears of Apostacy, *None can pluck Christ's sheep out of his hand,* John 10. 28. 8^{ly}, Here is Comfort against the Fears of the Ruine and Over-throw of the Church of God, when his Peoples Heart is trembling for the Ark, the Lord will fight for her; He is King in Zion, and Enemies rage in vain against his Church and People, Psal. second. The Church should lye near our Hearts: But ah! Most seek their own things. Yet, there is Ground of Comfort, the Church hath a near Friend on the Throne above. For, *He plants her,* Isai. 5. 1, 2. *He makes the wilderness to blossom as the rose,* Isai. 35. 1, 2. *He enlarges the bounds and members thereof,* Psal. 72. 8, 9, 10. *He purifies and purges her,* Mal. 3. 2. *He purges out wicked persons,* Isai. 52. 7. *And wicked things,* Isai. 27. 9. *He preserves her,* Isai. 27. 9. And Finally, It is a Fruit of his Ascension and sitting at the Father's right Hand, that the Church is built up, Ephel. 4. 12. Amidst all Confusions we need not fear, our glorious Redeemer sits in Glory as the Head of his Church; He Preserves her, he Establishes and Confirms her, against all the Attempts and Attacks of Enemies.

Observe 4th. Believers who patiently after Christ's Example endure the Cross, despising the Shame, shall at last Over-come, and be set down on the Throne with him, and obtain Eternal Glory.

To drop this Incouragement to suffering Believers, is the Scope of this Text. In this World they are Reproached and Contemned, and counted as the Off-scurings of all things,

things, 1 Cor. 4. 13. But they shall be put in a State of Credit and Honour; They who despise God, he will honour, but they who despise him shall be lightly esteemed, 1 Sam. 2. 30. *Let us suffer with him, ye shall reign with him, 2 Tim. 2. 12.*

I shall first prove the Truth of this Doctrine. Secondly, Touch a little at the Nature of this blessed State. Thirdly, Apply the Whole.

First, The Truth of this Doctrine doth appear from Luke 22. 28, 29. *Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my father hath appointed unto me. Rom. 8. 17. If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Mark 10. 29, 30. Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake, and the gospel's: But he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, — and in the world to come everlasting life. 2 Cor. 4. 17. Our light affliction which is for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Acts 14. 22. Revel. 8. 9.*

Secondly, I shall explain a little the Nature of this blessed State, by naming a few of the Saints Privileges; As 1st. Their Bodies shall be Glorious: They shall be Strong, their Work calls for it; When Moses had been long in the Mount with God, the Israelites weak Eyes could not look on his shining Countenance, till he put a Vail on his Face, Exod. 34. 33. Their Bodies shall be free from all Passions, Burdens, or Infirmities of Nature, Rev. 7. 16, 17. *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; For the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.* Their Bodies shall be Amiable and Beautiful, having excellent Proportion and Complexion, free of all Imperfection and Deformity. They shall be Incorruptible, Immortal and Honourable, 1 Cor. 15. 42, 43, 44. — *It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body: They shall be light and nimble, free of all Elementary Gravity. And in fine, Their bodies shall be like Christ's glorious body, Phil. 3. 21. This Out-shines Sun, Moon and Stars, and these shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever, Dan. 12. 3.*

Privilege 2^d. The Saints Souls shall be exceeding Glorious, 1 John 3. 2. *When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* They shall excel in Knowledge; the Mysteries of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Hypostatic Union of the two Natures in Christ's Person, of the mystical Union betwixt Christ and Believers, of God's Eternity and Decrees, shall then be distinctly understood; then shall they clearly conceive the Mystery of Providence, and shall discover that God's sharpest Rods prepared them for Glory, and raise their Songs in *Immortal's Land*. Then they shall be completely Holy, without Sin, or Desire, or Temptation to it, when they come to the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. 12. 23. There their Souls shall be full of Love and Joy in the blessed Jesus, and therefore sing a new song in the praise of the Lamb, Revel. 5. 9. This their Song shall go beyond the Song of Angels, who can only say, *Thou art worthy to take the Books and open the Seals thereof, for thou wast slain;* But the glorified Saints can raise the Song some Notes higher, saying, *Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation: No Angel in Heaven is redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, but only the Spirits of just Men. But who can describe the sweet Songs in that Region, where they will sing the Song of Moses and of the Lamb, Revel. 15. 3, 4: and still Echo out ALLELUJAS.* There is sweet Love among all Saints, all Debates

buried, and Peace concluded; *Calvin* and *Luther* pleasantly agree above. No jarring String amongst all the Saints Musick above; then their Souls shall be free of all Passions, as Anger, Wrath, Jealousie, Fear, Envy, Despair; none of these disturb the Saints Repose in Glory; they are disintangled of the Cares and perplexing Troubles of the World, and do enjoy perfect Peace, Serenity and Tranquillity.

Privilege 3. Saints above have a glorious Habitation, *John 14. 2.* In my Father's House are many Mansions. *2 Cor. 5. 1.* We know, that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. This Habitation is described, *Rev. 21.* from *Verf. 10.* to *Verf. 6.* of *Chap. 22.* and we may find, *First*, It is a House of a noble Original, *Rev. 21. 10.* it descends out of Heaven from God, it is the most excellent Piece of the Creator's Workmanship, where this blessed Architect hath discovered his matchless Skill. *2dly*, It is very large, being for Accommodation of all Saints through all Ages of Eternity, where they shall be entertained in State, not straitned in Accommodation. *3dly*, Well lighted, it is the brightest Body in the Creation, *Rev. 21. 11.* Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a Jasper stone, clear as Cristal; it hath also an extraordinary accessory Light, *Verf. 23.* The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof; this Light doth outshine Sun, Moon and Stars. *4thly*, This House is strong and high, *Rev. 21. 12.* it is above the Reach of all Storms and Tempests, all the Power of Men and Devils can do it no hurt, it hath Angels for it's Keepers, God is it's Master and Protector. *5thly*, It is neat and cleanly, there is nothing can defile it, no natural Pollution by Meat, Drink, Clothes, Dust, Fire, or bad Weather, the Saints are as Angels, and have no Business with any of these things which we are troubled with while here in Cottages of Clay: No moral Pollution there, Satan and wicked Men are thrown into the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone, *Rev. 21. 8.* *Chap. 22. 15.* no Fear of Sin, or Temptation to Sin, no Defection, nor Fear of Defection. *6thly*, It is of most curious and Rarely Workmanship and Contrivance; if the Streets be of pure Gold and precious Stones, as *Rev. 21. 18, 19.* what must the inner Rooms be? It's Gates are twelve, to admit all real *Israelites*, the Off-spring of the twelve Patriarchs, or Converts to the Apostles Doctrine: These Gates look to all Corners of the World; in whatever place of the World you live, if real Saints, ye shall be admitted to Glory; how accurate is the Proportion, how admirable the Structure? *7thly*, How wonderfully Excellent is this Habitation, here is the Presence of God, here is the Resort of all Nations; all the visible Heavens are but a Porch to it; it is the last and great Part of the Purchase of the Blood of Christ: If noble Houses be given to the crawling Monarchs of this Earth, what must this House be that is for entertaining all Christ's Friends in State and Triumph through all Ages of Eternity? where they shall Reign as Kings, with Crowns on their Heads, and Palms in their Hands.

Privilege 4. Saints above have all glorious Enjoyments, here they see the Glory of God's infinite Mercy extended to them in the lowest Abyss of Misery, and bringing them to the Top of Happiness: Matchless Love, reaching from Eternity to Eternity, infinite Power defending them from all Enemies, matchless Wisdom contriving their Redemption, and guiding them through the World to the Land of Paradise, and all sufficient Fulness communicate to all the redeemed Ones: Here they see the Glory of Christ, God-Man in their Nature, brighter than in the Mount of Transfiguration; here they see the Throne of the Lamb, and the glorious Attendants round the Throne; here they see his Face without the intervening Glass of Ordinances, or thick Clouds of Defection:

Dedication Hymn the best of Companies, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Patriarchs, Prophets,
 Kings of Old and New Testament, all unite in one Praise, and sing: There is the
 Fortress Rock, the best of Orders, the greatest Riches, the purest Pleasures, the greatest
 and most lasting Security, and in a Word, the Gloriousness and Chief of all Sweet-
 ness Comforts beyond all Conception or Expression.
 Use 1. Is it fit, then how reasonable is it that we should abandon our abominable
 Lusts which lead to everlasting Plagues? That we should dedicate our selves to God
 and his Service, and embrace our blessed Redeemer as our Sovereign and Saviour, as our
 Righteousness and Strength, *He that believeth shall be saved*, John 3:16.
 damned, Mark 16: 16.

Inference 2. Since Believers, you have the Hope of so glorious a Reward, how reasonable is it for you to serve the Lord cheerfully, and be holy in all manner of Conversation? That your Desires, your Joys and Comforts should be Heavenly, that you be willing to suffer with Christ, that so you may reign with him: That on Earth you begin your Work of loving, praising and admiring his Excellency, which you hope shall be your Work to Eternity: That you be unwearied in the Duties of Religion, be content with Christ as your only Portion, that you love one another, and love for the full Enjoyment of Christ your only well-beloved.

HEBREW'S XH Verfe

For only after this true and full contradiction of Sinners against himself, will
ye be satisfied and calm in your Minds.

IN these Words we have, *First*, A most dangerous Evil, from which we are delivered. *That it is not wanted*, is to Labour so as to bring on Weakness in the Conflict, or sinking and Despondency under Pressures and Difficulties through want of Life, Vigor and Cheerfulness.

Secondly, The Occasion, Rise and Cause of this Evil. *Faithless in your Minds that is a failing of our Resolution and Courage for God and Duties*. The Words may be broken, or, *Dissolved in your Minds*; It is to have the Strength and Vigor of the Will dissolved, so as to fall and fall like a dying Man. In a Word, it lies in the Remission of the due using of Faith by all Graces, and in all Duties, for Faith engages spiritual Courage, Resolution, Patience, Prayer, and all persevering Duties.

Thirdly, In the Text we have the Means prescribed, to prevent this Evil, and that is the diligent Consideration of the Person of Christ and his Sufferings. *Consider that endured such contradiction of Sinners against himself*. Where consider,

First, His Person, we spoke of this in the former Verse. *Looking unto Jesus*.

Secondly, As to his Sufferings, he proposes the Consideration of them in one special Instance, where every Word is emphatical, *He endured such contradiction of Sinners against himself*. In which, *First*, The Nature of his Sufferings, *Contradiction*, *artificial*, it

It is used for any kind of Opposition in Things as well as Words, and so may include the whole Sufferings of Christ from Mankind. But, no doubt, the Apostles had principal Respect to the Revilings and Reproachings he met with, calling him a Deceiver and a Beelzebub. 2ly, The Degree of his Sufferings, they exceeded such Contradiction, pointing forth the Severity and Cruelty thereof, what the malicious Wit of Man, or Suggestions of Satan could invent and broach, was all cast on him before, and in his Death. 3ly, The Instruments thereof, Sinners, such as gave no Bounds to their Wrath and Malice, by this a Reflection is put on them: It was Priests, Scribes and Pharisees, who thought themselves Just and Righteous, and all other Sinners, but they deceived themselves, they were worst of Sinners. 4ly, These his Sufferings were all immediate, even to his Face, against himself in Person; so they told him openly to his Face he had a Devil, and was a Seducer. Now the Consideration of Christ's patient enduring all these, is proposed as the Means to keep them from wearying and fainting. From this Verse

Observe, 1. That such things may fall out to the People of God in the way of their Profession of the Gospel, as are apt to burthen them, and make them faint.

Observe, 2. When a Soul begins to be heartless, desponding, and fainting, it is apt to weary of Sufferings, and in great Hazard of Apostasy, and Desertion from the Gospel.

Observe, 3. The believing Consideration of Christ's enduring such singular, unparalleled, and extraordinary Sufferings, should be a notable Antidote against our fainting and wearying under our Crosses.

Observe, 4. Whoever contradicts the Truth, and Professors of it, let them pretend what they will of Righteousness and Religion, they are in the Spirit of God's account the greatest of Sinners, liable to Death and Wrath.

Observe, 5. That if we design Perseverance to a Day of Trial and Persecution, it is both our Wisdom and Duty to keep up Faith in a vigorous Exercise; without which we can ever bear on; if this be wanting, presently follows fainting, but as 1 Cor. 16. 13. Let us stand fast in the Faith, and then we will quit our selves like Men, and be brave. This is the Apostles Scope in my Text. I return to speak to the most comprehensive of these, as

Observe, First, That such things may befall the People of God, in adhering to their Gospel Profession, as are apt to make them faint.

In opening this Note, I shall shew what these things are that may make the People of God faint and be weary in their holy Profession. 1ly, How to be weary under these Distresses. 2ly, Why he troubles his People with such Distresses.

As to the First, These Distresses hazard Professions of the Gospel their fainting. First, Cross Trials and afflictive Dispensations put some in Danger to cry out, This will be of the Lord, why wait I on the Lord any longer? Job was sore put to it by his Afflictions. 2ly, Satans Temptations and fiery Darts, thrown by fierce and frequent Attacks. Psal. 77. 8, 9, Is his Mercy clean gone for ever? and his Promise fail for evermore? Shall God be forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender Mercy? 3ly, Cruel and sore Persecution, Reproach, Imprisonment, Exile, and threatened Death. 4ly, Cross and continual Conflicts with a Body of Sin and predominant Idols, these Warchings and Fightings, Fears and Cares are in hazard to make them faint, without they be singularly supported. 5ly, Long and great Desertions made David cry, How long will thou hide thy Face from me? how long shall I take counsel in my Soul, having sorrow in my Heart daily? Hear me, O Lord, enlighten mine Eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of Death. Psal. 13. 1, 2, 3. 6ly, The

Hebrews XII. Verse 3.

82

Unful Care of this World about Pleasures, Profits, Honours, and Estates, get such Room that it is like to wear out Religion, and make woe of it, Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present World.

More particularly, there are some Ingredients in these Distresses that in a special Manner endanger the Soul's fainting and wearying in the way of Religion.

First, In Afflictions, hereby carnal Ease is disturbed and crossed, every Affliction is like a Lion in the way to a Sluggard that would sleep on in the Arms of Pleasure and earthly Satisfaction. *2^d*, The Duration and Continuance of them hazard faintings. *3^d*, Something in the Trial that is surprising, touching, robbing us of darling Comforts, that like *Jonah's Gourd*, makes him faint, so as he will even lie down and die. *4th*, Fear of God's Anger at the Root of them is very depending to Saints, *Psal. 6. 1. 3.* O Lord rebuke me not in thine Anger; ——— My Soul is sore vexed, but thou, O Lord, how long?

Secondly, Satan's Temptations have several Ingredients that make the Christian in Danger of fainting; as, *First*, He is mighty in his Assaults, *We wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principities and Powers*, *Eph. 6. 12.* he is a roaring Lion ready to devour. *2^d*, He is malicious, a roaring Lion, raging and foaming out Wrath against the Saints of the most High. *3^d*, He is continual, assiduous and indefatigable, hath nothing else to do but lie at the catch, still going about, so that without extraordinary Supplies they cannot bear out without fainting. *4th*, Another thing in Temptations that hazards fainting, is Subtility, and this is the worst of all the former: And therefore it will not be amiss I insist a little on this, to put you on your Guard; for especially after Communion Days and Fasting Days he will be on you with his Depths and Devices: These perhaps are Mythenes to the Generality of you, with whom it is in vain for him to shape out his Designs and Temptations with that Measure of Subtility, as to rack his cunning Invention; for he carries you with Ease before him; But for serious seekers of God, that have got a View of his Might, Malice and Subtility against their Souls, I will go through a few of his Subtilties in order to make you faint, that you may prevent his Design, and that you may stand in the evil Days, and hold fast what you have received, that no Man take your Crown. As,

First, One of his Subtilties lyes in his choosing a fit Season to set his Temptations a foot against you, he casts in his Hook baited at a time when he thinks it is most probable you will catch; as, *First*, At Souls Entrance in Religion, when newly Lifted in Christ's Roll; he never disturbs while they continue in his Servitude, but when they break his Prison by Conversion, he lays clost Siege to them by violent Temptations; that when the Child of Grace is newly born, he may strangle him. *2^d*, At Season, When idle and unemployed, while the Bird sits still and not on the Wire, then he shoots, *Math. 13. 25.* While men slept, his Enemy came and sowed Tares among the Wheat. When David was walking on the top of his House, without being exercised with any piece of Christian Task, then Satan casts a tempting Object in his Eye, *1. Sam. 11. 2. 3.* When reduced to outward Wants and Straits, then is his tempting Time; when Christ had fasted forty Days and was Hungry, then he tempts, saying, *Command these Stones to be made Bread*, *Math. 4. 3.* So when to Man Provisions fall short, he sets in, What? Will thou starve rather than steal? and prevails with many to steal the Communion, Gifts, and the like Occasions you have been lately at; after Christ's Fasting and Praying, where Peter was present, then comes Satan. For *First*, Christians

are then getting Good, and of new engaging against their Spiritual Adversaries, and thus Satan with his subtlety against them. 1y, He expects now to find them most secure, grow familiar, and leave off former Desires, like a Soldier, who after the Battle lays off his Armour, after a full Meal we are apt to grow drowsy. 2y, After some Discoveries of God's Love, which is like a Ship to the Lighthouse, then this arch Pirate attacks; after David got the good News of the Pardon of his Sin, he is tempted to a new Sin in Numbering the People, so all his Comforts leak'd out and were lost. 3y, When he feels us weakest, as when alone, so he came to Eve when her Husband was away, he gives his Poison privately, when no Body is by; and when the hour of Death approaches, when Israel were brought to pass over and possess the promised Land, then all the Kings of Canaan command their Forces against them: So now, Satan sets on the Believer, saying, Ye are Hypocrites, and all your Evidences counterfeit; when Death strikes at the Body, he strikes at the Soul.

2. Subtily, He carries on his Temptations gradually, this old Serpent winds himself in by Degrees, first tempting to lesser Sins, then to greater, as David to a wanton Look, and that ushered in Adultery and Murder.

3. Thirdly, He hands over Temptations to us by unsuspect Persons, from whom we jealous no Evil; as by near Relations, 7y, by his Wife, Chap. 2. v. 9. Satan oft withdraws behind the Wall, not to be seen in the Business; he also employs religious Friends, so he made use of Peter, he steps in and speaks out of him, to dissuade Christ from Suffering; but our Lord quickly spied this cunning Jugler, and commands him to be gone, *Get thee behind me, Satan*, Matth. 16. 23.

4. 4th Subtily, There are some kinds of People he haunts with his Temptations more than others; Some will not so easily take with his Bait, others quickly suck it in: As 1st, Poor ignorant People; You may lead a blind Man where you will: The poor blind Bird is soon shot, so the God of this World first blinds Men, 2 Cor. 4. 4. and then kills them. 2y, These who are under gross Unbelief, who believe neither a God, Heaven, nor Hell; What Sin will they not be tempted to? The Devil can dye that Man of any Colour. Paul was much afraid of them, and prays, *That he may be delivered from them that do not believe in Jesus*, Rom. 15. 31. 3y, Proud persons, these he hath great Power over, they are readiest to fall who stand high in their own Conceit; When David's Heart is lifted up with Pride, then Temptation takes, 2 Sam. 24. 2. 4y, Melancholy Persons soon faint by Satan's Temptations; Satan works exceedingly on this Humor, it gives him great Advantage: For 1st, Melancholy indisposes for Duty, and dis-spirits a Soul for its Work. 2y, It sides off with Satan against God; The Devil says, *God loves thee not, no Mercy for thy Soul*; The Soul cries, *Ah! I fear it is so*. 3y, It breeds Discontent, and this is the Rise of Variety of Sins; Unthankfulness, Impatience; Yea, sometimes worse. 5y, Satan hath great Advantage against idle People, he finds them work ado; when throng at work, the Devil will not get in, but if the Hands be not working, the Head will be plotting Sin, *Idolab. 2. 1. We to them that devise Iniquity, and work evil upon their beds*.

5. 5th Subtily, Our Adversary will leave off a while, and give some lucid Intervals; that afterward he may step in with more Advantage; As Israel made, as if they had been beaten before the Men of Moab: But it was a Policy to draw them out of their fenced Cities, and ensnare them by Ambush; So doth Satan, Luke 11. 24, 25, 26.

6y, Satan deceives Souls, and makes them faint, either by making them cease from Duty, or misarrying in it; He labours to put you from Duty, as Prayer, Hearing, Reading,

Hebrews XII. Verse 3.

69

Reading, Communicating: Either by suggesting to them their Unworthiness to approach to God, or have any Significations of his Love, which is like *Peter's* Divinity. *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man:* Whereas our sinful Case calls for Christ as a Saviour to cure it: Or, he objects to a Believer, Thou art never better of Duty, Why should thou meddle more in it? Who would sow Seed when no Crop comes up? Cast it: Either 1st, By Distractions, proposing vain Objects, 2^{ly}, Miscarry in the Use of Affections, raising a Noise of Confusion, that they know not where they are, nor what they are about. And 2^{ly}, By putting them to do Duties in a wrong manner, in a dead, formal, overly, superficial Way; Or for wrong Ends, as the *Pharisees*, who prayed to be seen of Men, *Matth. 6. 5.*

3^{ly}, There are some Ingredients in Persecution that hazard Fainting; As First, The secular Loss and Damage; usually the Estate is Seized, the Family turned out of House and Harbour; How Icksome and Faintish is this to Flesh and Blood? 2^{ly}, The Shame and Reproach that attends this State of Life; persecuted Men are reckoned Base, Ignominious, and the Off-scourings of the Earth; Scorn, Contempt and Flouting, make Men ready to Faint. 3^{ly}, The Pain and Torture of it, to bear the Hatred and Malice of an enraged persecuting World, to be exposed to the Fury of Flames, to wild Beasts, and the like Torments: How affrighting is it to humane Nature? 4^{ly}, Death it self in all its most barbarous and tremendous Shapes, into which all their Cruelties resolve; How ready may this be to make a Man faint and succumb? And yet we ought to enjoy our Life so, as to be as free to part with it for Christ and the Gospel, as if we hated it.

4^{ly}, There are some things in a Christian's close and continual Conflicts with a Body of Sin and Predominant Idols, which may make the Christian run the hazard of Fainting: As First, The horrid and detestable Nature of Sin, in the Filthiness and exceeding Sinfulness of it, makes them on first Sight faint and fall down as dead Men, *Rom. 7. 9.* — *when the commandment came sin revived and I died.* 2^{ly}, The Universality of this Depravation, altogether filthy, all full of Sores, running Boils, and Bloody Issues. 3^{ly}, The continual and incessant Risings of Sin, when in Pursuit of one Lust, another starts up; Yea, this Monster shuts out many Heads at once; This frights and they rush upon them like mad Men, *Psal. 102. 8.* 4^{ly}, The strange Force and Violence, by which Predominant Sins attack, receive, *Psal. 63. 3.* *Iniquities prevail against me:* Hence they fear they never recover but sink Eternally. This makes poor Saints weary with their Groaning, and water their Couch with their Tears.

5^{ly}, The Saints long, and great Desertions hazard their Fainting, *Psal. 13. 1, 2, 3.* For First, God appears as an Enemy wroth and angry; So says *Job*, *Thou countest me for thine enemy:* And *Hosea* says, *I reckoned till morning, that as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.* *Isai. 38. 13.* 2^{ly}, All their former Comforts that supported them are out of Sight. 3^{ly}, They are ready to conclude all former Experiences to have been but mere Delusions. 4^{ly}, Misbelief is ready to fix a long Term-day to their present Misery: *Will the Lord call off for ever, will he be favourable no more?*

Secondly, I proposed to shew how Saints may be carried through all these Trials without Fainting: I cannot go through particular Cordials under each of these Distresses for the Believer to make use of to keep him from Fainting; but only in general take these Directions.

First,

First, Get your Peace with God secured, *Rom. 5. 1, 3, 4.* Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: — And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope. **2^{ly}**, Get Love to Christ in lively Exercise; this will make you follow him through Fire and Water, all the Waters of Marah will not be able to quench it; this made Paul at a Point, saying, — I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus, *Acts 21. 13.* To raise this Love, meditate frequently and seriously on his Love to you, *1 John 4. 19.* We love him; because he first loved us. *2 Cor. 5. 14.* The love of Christ constraineth us, —

Thirdly, Be much in the Practice of Self-denial; it is Self that is crossed and pinched by Tryals: And thence follows Fainting, and a Loathness to persevere. Christ and Self in all Tryals come in Competition, so that either Self or Christ must be denied. Therefore, **First**, Deny your own Worth and Excellency, renounce all Conceit of your Accomplishments and Enjoyments; Should ye think your selves too good to suffer for Christ? To lye in the Furnace of Persecution or Desertion? **2^{ly}**, Deny your own Judgment and Wisdom, else you will be too wise to undergo these Tryals, if you consult with Flesh and Blood, you will faint and set up your Staff. **3^{ly}**, Deny your own carnal Reasonings; You will reason your selves out of Courage to suffer for Christ, as if Christ were too small a Matter to lose all for: Carnal Reason will say, *It is controverted by great Men; It is a Point not clear; It is yielded to by Men of Learning*: And thus weaken your Hands from suffering for the Truths of God. **4^{ly}**, Deny your own Wills, Say, *Not my will but thine be done*: Thus ye may be preserved from Fainting, by yielding your selves to God's Disposal. **5^{ly}**, Deny your own Ease and Conveniency, if thou forego not these, thou wilt never set thy Neck in this Yoke. / This leads to

Direction 4th, Die to the World, get your Heart and Affections disingaged, your Mind loosed more and more from it: If Relations or Enjoyments be Over-valued, then no more of Christ in a Furnace of Afflictions and Conflicts with Predominants, *2 Tim. 4. 10.* Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.

Direction 5th, Acquaint your selves more with God, get the Soul filled with effectual Apprehensions of him, what he is in himself, and what he is to his People; walk in sight and view of God; This kept Moses from fainting, *Exod. 24. 18.* Consider **First**, The All-sufficiency of God enough to make up all you can lose for him; As well doubt, if all the Waters in the vast Ocean can fill the hollow of your Hand, as that Divine Fulness cannot be enough to you, tho you should have nothing left in this World. **2^{ly}**, Eye much the Power of God, how it can support you under, and what it can bring to pass for you by your Tryals, *Ephes. 3. 20.* He is able to do exceedingly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us: You say, how will I be able to bear such a Trial? God's Power to support answers your Distress. **3^{ly}**, Look to his Goodness, whereby he is willing to do for you under your Tryals, all that his All-sufficiency and Power can afford and effectuate.

6^{ly}, Furnish your selves with more Spiritual Strength for your Tryals, and this shall keep you from fainting; Not only seek for Habitual Grace, but for Actual Strength, that consists in the present Exercise of Grace, and there is an Auxiliary Strength, consisting in Divine Influences and Assistances, *Ephes. 6. 10.* Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; Secure these, and you shall not faint, but endure to the end, and be saved.

I proposed *Thirdly*, In opening this Note, to enquire why the Lord trifles his People with such searching, shaking, and trying Dispensations and Pressures? To this I Answer, There are two kind of Reasons for it: *First*, Some Sovereign Ends God designs to accomplish for his own Glory. *Secondly*, Some sinful Causes bringing down Trouble on our selves.

For the *First*, God designs to rid Marches betwixt his own People and others; The serious Godly, and the painted Hypocrite: As long as the Way is broad and easie, Multitudes walk in it; but when straitened with such Tryals, this calls for Striving: Then says the Hypocrite, *Farewel Christ and Religion, we have enough of you.*

Secondly, God hereby tries his People, that he may have an Experiment of their Affection and Faithfulness; Who is on my side, who, says *Jehu*? So says Christ, when he brings on Tryals: The sharper and heavier, the more Love to me will that Man shew, that takes it up chearfully for my sake; the more Faithfulness, that uses not Shifts, Distinctions, and Pretences, to keep off, or throw the Cross off, when my Glory is concerned.

Thirdly, These Tryals are for the Advantage of Grace, to keep it Lively and in Exercise; Otherways our Armour should ly by rusting: Grace gets or loses, as it is more or less Exercised.

Fourthly, To take us off the World: Tryals imbitter the World to us, and confutes these Conceits that make us fond of it; The Martyrs (*Heb. 11. 37, 38.*) were as willing to be rid of the World, as the World was to be of them: By the Cross of Christ we are crucified to the World, and the World unto us, *Gal. 6. 14.*

Fifthly, To tame the Flesh and keep it under, which otherways would grow Headstrong, and bear down all the Restraints of Grace, and hurry us into Carnal Excess; Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit, *John 15. 2.* He lops off the Luxuriant Branches of Natural Corruption; And how is this done? By a sharp Cross, *Isa. 57. 9.*

Sixthly, To endear Heaven to us, the Ark was the more acceptable to *Noah's Dove*, when she found no rest to the Sole of her foot on Earth; So when we have sought the good fight of faith, the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will give, will be most acceptable, *1 Tim. 4. 7, 8.*

Seventhly, That they may value Spiritual Comforts the more, which consist in the Enjoyment of his Presence, *Psal. 84. 10. A day in thy court is better than a thousand.*

Eighthly, He sends them into these Depths, that he may fit them for special Service; a Home-bred Spirit is a low Spirit; but these who are trained up with Heights and Depths, with Winds, Tempests and Rocks, are fit to be Pilots to others: The Apostle blesteth God, Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God, *2 Cor. 1. 3, 4.* There are many things a Man cannot learn in Books, but he must learn in his own Life, that he may speak from Experience to others.

Ninthly, He casts down by Tryals, that he may manifest his Power, Faithfulness and Mercy in lifting them up again, *Psal. 102. 10.*

Tenthly, That they may know the Fellowship of Christ in his Tryals and Sufferings, that thereby the Soul may be made more conformable to him, *Phil. 3. 10. If we suffer with him, we may be also glorified together, Rom. 8. 17.*

Eleventhly, To shew the Freedom of all Spiritual Comforts, that it is God alone keeps the Keys of Heaven's Wine Cellars, and dispenseth Apples of Consolation as he pleaseth,

perfectly. *Ipsa. 45. 6, 7. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil.* — 2 Cor. 1. 3. *He is the God of all comfort.*

Twelfthly, To keep his People humble, *The Lord led Israel in the wilderness forty years, and humbled them.* Deut. 8. 2. *A messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations.* — 2 Cor. 12. 7.

Thirteenthly, To resolve at last into confirming and establishing Grace, which will preserve from fainting, 1 Pet. 5. 10. *But the God of grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

Fourteenthly, To keep Saints at a Trade of Prayer, *Paul brought the Lord thither, that the messenger of Satan might depart from him.* 2 Cor. 12. 8. *Christ when in agony prayed more earnestly.* Luke 22. 44. *He offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears.* So much for Sovereign Ends, why God tries his People with such shaking Discomforts. — I come.

Secondly, To some sinful Causes which bring down Trouble on our own Heads: As **First,** Too much Self-confidence and little Dependence on God, *Psal. 30. 6, 7. In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.* — *Then didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* When Peter was too confident, saying, *The all men be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.* Matth. 26. 33. then he quickly fainted. 2ly, In improving former Comforts, common and special, entertaining poor, mean, base Thoughts of a present Christ and casting Ascents on him, brings on sad Days of Fainting and Distress; 3ly, Some un-repentant of and un-humbled for Sin in the Heart; 4ly, Quenching the Motions, and contemning the Gales of his blessed Spirit, which now and then attended the Soul; this is to cast out his Plenishing, and warn himself to be gone. 5ly, Much Formality and Indisposition of Spirit in spiritual Performances, doing the Work of the Lord negligently, offering to the Lord that which hath cost you nothing, this brings down a Curse, *Mal. 1. 13, 14. I have said the Lord will hide his Face, and leave you to faint, alone in Distress.* Hos. 4. 15. 6ly, Stubbornness under former Trials brings on new ones, *Ipsa. 37. 17. For the iniquity of his Covetousness I was wrath, and from his Little me, and was wrath, and he rose up against me in the way of his Heart.* 7ly, Refusing to obey God's Call when he calls them to special Service for himself; this was Jacob's Case; well, God sends a Scorn without and within, his Body is cast into the Sea, and his Soul into a Cloud of Desolation, *Job 20. 4.* When we will not witness for God, no Reason his Spirit should witness to us.

Observe, 2. The serious Consideration of the Lord Christ's rending such singular, unparalleled and extraordinary Sufferings, should be a notable antidote against our wearying and fainting; Consider him that endured such Contradiction of sinners, lest we be wearied. Or take the Note thus, *That if we mind to persevere and hold out in a Day of Trial, it is both our Wisdom and Duty to keep Faith in vigorous Exercise, and fix it on a suffering Christ.* This is the force of the Exhortation in my Text, *If thou thus take the Shield of Faith, thou mayest hold out, and hold on to the end.* This and the former Note contain the Sum of the Text.

In opening this Doctrine, I shall, **First,** Enquire how will Faith give Courage, and prevent Fainting. 2ly, What in Christ Faith looks to, and brings Strength and Courage from.

Enquiry

Hebrews XII. Vers. 3.

73

Enquiry first. How will Faith give Courage, and prevent Fainting? *Answer first.* It engageth God's Strength for you, and then what Fear? What Cross or Trial will not his Strength bear? Faith ensures you, *That you shall be kept by the Power of God, through Faith to Salvation:— And tho' for a Season ye are in heaviness through manifold Temptation— Yet ye shall receive the end of your Faith, the Salvation of your Souls,* 1 Pet. 1. 5, 6,— God's Faithfulness cannot disappoint you:

Secondly, Faith stays it self on God, *Isa. 50. 10.* O noble Staff to lean on under Weights! *To come out of the Wilderness leaning on our Beloved,* Song 8. 5. *To cast thy Burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee,* Psal. 55. 22. Faith bids thee cast thy self and it on him, Faith rolls it off thy weak Back on the Lord, and so eases thee.

Thirdly, Faith brings auxiliary Supplies and Influences from Heaven, to hold up the Soul, *Psal. 27. 13.* *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the living.* *Isa. 40. 31.* *They that wait on the Lord shall renew their Strength, they shall mount up with Wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and walk and not be faint.*

Fourthly, Faith strengthens by it's Representations, *It is the Substance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not seen; First,* It represents Christ under Trials, as standing by the afflicted Believer, seeing, feeling, bearing him, bearing his Weights, smiling upon and pleased with him for suffering so cheerfully for a good Cause. *2ly,* As finding him putting in his Almighty Arm, to ease and support him under the Pressure, holding his Head up, wiping the Sweat and Blood off his Face with all affectionate Tenderness. *3ly,* As speaking in his Ear, *Well done thou good and faithful Servant, I see thy Love and Faithfulness to me, this is a seeing him who is invisible,* Heb. 11. 27.

Secondly, Faith represents Heaven as set open to the Believers Eye, all these approaching Glories as if present, concluding, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me at that Day,* 2 Tim. 4. 8.

Thirdly, Faith represents the Cross, as if it were past, or at least but for a Moment, and it can easily look over a Moment, when the boundless Length and Breadth of Eternity is in his Eye, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.

More particularly, Faith will give Courage and prevent Fainting, *First,* By putting the Believer in a secure safe Condition, having the well grounded Hope of eternal Life, founded on Gospel Terms, he defies all Trials from Men and Devils to rob him of his Treasure, or make him poor, *Psal. 27. 3.* *Rom. 8. 38, 39.* *For I am persuaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other Creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; a Man is not troubled for his Fears and Faintings when he is provided for his Life:*

Secondly, By fitting the Soul with glorious and suitable Apprehensions of the great God as the only supream Agent, at whose Nod all Inferiours move, *moti movementa.* Faith views God so, as to discover, that there is no Power in any Creature but from him; that the Exercise and Acting of that Power is from him, that the Force and Extent of that Power is from him, that the Success is from the supream Cause; what then can occasion Fainting? the Believer is beyond Fear, *Isa. 54. 16, 17.* *I have created the Smith that bloweth the Coals, I have created the waster to destroy: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every Tongue that shall rise against thee in Judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the Heritage of the Servants of the Lord, and their Righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.*

Thirdly, Faith brought the Believer over another kind of Trial, than any now can come, when in a State of Nature delivered thee from the Wrath of the eternal God, from the Fear of Damnation, from the Terror of Conscience, the Curse of the Law, the Thicket of Hell; and if it was the Instrument of thy Delivery from the Mouth of the Lion and Paw of the Bear, would thou now faint at the Sight of Gold-like Tryals?

Rom. 8. 1. There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

Fourthly, Faith implants the real Fear of God in the Heart, creating holy Reverence and Dread of him there, knowing that to sink and faint would dishonour him, therefore they stand firm to the end.

Fifthly, By discovering to the Soul it's rich Fond for Supports, they that be with us are more than they that be against us; the Prophet's Servant was afraid when he saw Horses and Chariots, and a great Host coming against his Master, *but the Prophet prayed, and his Eyes was opened, and he beheld, the Mountain was full of Horses and Chariots round about Elshaz,* 2 Kings 6. 16, 17. The Lord's People in their Distress have the Chambers of God's Attributes and Providences to hide them, the Creatures all working for Good, yea Angels as an invisible Guard encamping about them.

Sixthly, By bringing in the Spirit of Christ into the Soul, now *Christ is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah,* Rev. 5. 5. His Spirit is a Spirit of Might, *Isa. 11. 2.* which fills with Courage, and keeps from Fainting, *2 Tim. 1. 7. For God hath not given us the Spirit of Fear, but of Power, of Love, and of a sound Mind.*

Seventhly, By taking the Heart off the Creature and all Comforts of it, which occasions Fainting; tho' temporal Enjoyments be removed, yet the Believers Heart is not fixed upon them, *He loves not his Life to the Death,* Rev. 12. 11. He will willingly quite it, rather than dishonour Christ, he is not afraid of Losses, nor of Death, for he cannot lose Christ, and he is prepared to die.

Eighthly, Faith interests God in the Believers Cause, and this quiets the Soul, and keeps from fainting, *The Lord's my Shepherd, I shall not want,* Psal. 23. 1.

Ninthly, By acquainting a Believer with the Way of God toward his People, that it is his ordinary to train them with Trials; and this is no Argument he hath forsaken them, *Isa. 43. 2. When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee.*

Tenthly, By putting the Soul in a high and glorious Condition; a great Man ordinarily is not so feared and faintish as a poor Body, *Isa. 43. 4, 5. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give thee for thee, and People for thy Life: Fear not, for I am with thee.* Angels should love Saints, Devils should fear them, for Saints shall judge them; but why should Saints faint or fear.

Eleventhly, By making all the Promises run with suitable Supplies in Straits, what a Vertue is in these Promises, *Deut. 31. 8. Isa. 41. 10. And the Lord, he is that doth go before thee, he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed.* How powerfully may the Soul be preserved from fainting by these sweet Cordials?

Twelfthly, Faith brings in former Experiences to preserve from sinking, *Psal. 42. 6. Psal. 87. 4.*

Thirteenthly, By helping to keep a good Conscience, which goes hand in hand with Faith, *1 Tim. 1. 19. Holding Faith, and a good Conscience,* Job 11. 14, 15. *If Iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy Tabernacles; for then shalt thou lift up thy Face without Spot, yea thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear.*

Enquiry

Hebrews XII Verse 3.

79

Enquiry. What is it in Christ from which Faith brings Strength and Courage to preserve from fainting? *Answer first,* Faith fetcheth plentiful Supplies from Christ's Mediatory Fulness, *John 1. 14, 16. The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. And of his Fulness have we all received, and Grace for Grace.*

Secondly, His Offices are a rich Store-house, as a Prophet he removes thy Darknes, when thou knowest not what is Sin, or what is Duty, as a Priest he cancels the Sentence of Wrath, as a King he breaks the Power of Sin.

Thirdly, His suited Qualifications to act as Mediator, *Heb. 7. 25. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.*

Fourthly, From God's Warrant to believe on Christ, *John 6. 27. Him hath God the Father sealed; he had, First, The Privy Seal of God the Father's Election, whereby he was constitute Head of the Elect Company. 2ly, Sealed by the indelible Character of the Father's Glory, Heb. 1. 3. by the Fulness of the Deity dwelling in his Humanity, Col. 2. 9. 3ly, By the broad Seal of an audible Testimony from Heaven, Mark 3. 17. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 4ly, Sealed by many Miracles, which were so many visible Testimonies of the Father's Presence with him. 5ly, He was sealed by his Baptism and solemn Inauguration and Instalment into his Office. 6ly, By sensible Tokens from Heaven, when hanging on the Cross.*

Fifthly, Faith brings a Cordial to keep from fainting, from Christ's Amiability in himself considered; O the infinite Suavity, Worth and Excellency conceived in him! If Faith's Eye be open, a Soul cannot faint within view of it, *Sag 5. 16. His affections are lovely; there is nothing unlovely or undesirable in him, the excellent Perfections of Christ are exclusive of all their opposites. Yes, 2ly, He is comprehensive of all things that are lovely, who can tell his Worth, his Price is above Rubies, Prov. 8. 11. Things that shine as single Stars with particular Glory, meet all in Christ as a most glorious Constellation in their most effulgent and irradiant Brightness, Col. 1. 19. He pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell; Cast your Eyes through the Universe, and observe the Strength of one, the Beauty of a second, the Wisdom of a third, but none have all Perfections but Christ only: He is Bread to the Hungry, Water to the Thirsty, Pardon to the Guilty, Strength to the Weak, and in a Word, all in all, Col. 2. 11: 3ly, Nothing is lovely in Opposition to him, or Separation from him, take away Christ, where is the Loveliness of any Enjoyment? The best Creature Comfort out of Christ is but a broken Cistern, cannot hold one Drop of spiritual Comfort, *Psal. 73. 25. Where have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon the Earth, that I desire besides thee.**

The Sixth Cordial Faith brings from Christ, is, that he is the Life of the Believers Soul, *Col. 3. 4. He is the Life of Grace here, Gal. 2. 22. He is the Life of Glory, which Believers shall live in Glory to all Eternity; this Life being lectured, what can make the Soul faint?*

Seventhly, It brings daily fresh Influences from him for refreshing, reviving, and watering this Life, *He is as the Dew unto Israel, Hosea 14. 5. He shall grow as the Lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon: This Dew cools the Heat of Lust and very Temptation, it puts a stop to Paul's Career in Sin, Acts 9. it is of a mollifying Nature, the frozen Heart is melted into a flame of Love thereby, Luke 24. 32. it also frustrates Seed, Herbs and Grass are made to spring by dewy Showers, all Labours of the Husband Man go to nothing, if they want the summer and latter Rain,*

Eighthly, The Believer is a poor diseased Creature; one Malady after another seizeth him, but Faith brings new Cures for each from Christ, none are desperate or passing his Cure, *Hos. 14. 4. I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely*; when the Heart is encouraged with the Sense of this, be the Wound what it will thou hast got in Trials, here is a Cure, what ground then of fainting?

Ninthly, Faith sees the Power of God in Christ, *1 Cor. 1. 24. God hath by Christ put forth his Almighty Power, and engaged it for thy Salvation, and thus keeps from fainting under all Trials. Take a view only of a few of these great things God hath done by Christ for thee: First*, Justice is satisfied for thy Sin, *Gal. 3. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* *2ly*, He hath brought in everlasting Righteousness, bearing of the Curse treeth thee from Hell, but thou must have Righteousness to bring thee to Heaven, and here it is, *Dan. 9. 24. 2 Cor. 5. 21. 1 Cor. 1. 30.* therefore faint not. *3ly*, He hath reconciled thee to himself, *2 Cor. 5. 19.* *4ly*, Hath broke and dissolved the Devil's Power over thee, *Col. 2. 15. Having Spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them.* *5ly*, Hath abolished Death, and ransomed thee from the Grave, *Hos. 13. 14. I will ransom them from the Power of the Grave, I will redeem them from Death: O Death, I will be thy Plague, O Grave, I will be thy Destruction.* *6ly*, He hath delivered thee from a present evil World, *Gal. 1. 4. He hath overcome the World, John 16. 33.* *7ly*, He hath picked thee up from Satan's Fireside, and entitled thee to the Adoption of Sons; the Work of Conversion is a great Work, it is the opening blind Eyes, it is raising dead Souls to Life, O how great Opposition? Man himself is unwilling, *John 5. 40. the Mind, Will and Affections stand all with Weapons in their hands to oppose this Work: The World hinders it, mustering up it's Forces, Pleasures, Profits and carnal Relations to resist the Work of Grace. Satan the great Enemy of our Salvation musters up all his Train Bands, Luke 11. 21. The strong Man armed keeps his Palace; Yet doth Christ by the Power of God carry on his Work, and make all give way, and yield to his Design, Acts 2. 37. Now seeing this is done, is there any Fear of thy being undone, be thy Trial what it will? Why then should thou faint?*

HEBREWS XII. Verse 4.

To have not yet resisted unto Blood, striving against Sin.

THE Apostle having set in Believers View the Lord Christ as their Pattern and Copy under Trials and Pressures, and directed how to imitate and improve him; he proceeds to argue from other Topicks, to confirm his Exhortation to Patience, and Perseverance under Trials and Sufferings. In this Text he argues from the Consideration of their present State, and what yet further they might be exposed to, on the Cause for which they are contending: Faint not while running with Footmen, ye may yet be put to contend with Horses, *To have not yet resisted unto Blood, striving against Sin. Wherein consider,*

Hebrews XII. Verse 4.

77

First, Their present State; and this is expressed Negatively, *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood*: You are far from drinking so deep of the Cup of Affliction as others, tho' you have endured sore Afflictions already, as Chapter 10. 32, 33, 34: Yet you have not suffered unto Life and Blood; your Warfare is not yet over.

Secondly, He suggests what they might yet expect, *Blood*: That is, all sorts of Violence, Death, Sword, Torture, Fire, the utmost the Wrath of Men can arrive at. Any Christian may be called to the last Sufferings by Blood, and what befalls us easier than Bloody Sufferings is a Fruit of God's Tenderness and Mercy.

Thirdly, The Cause whence their present and future Trials did and were to proceed, or the Party with whom the Contest was, and that is *Sin*, not their Persecutors themselves considered, as Devils, or wicked Men, but *Sin* in them, and *Sin* in the People of God themselves, 1 Pet. 2. 11. *Fleshly lusts war against the soul*. Ephes. 6. 12. *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*.

Fourthly, The way or manner of opposing this Enemy, that we be not robbed of our Crown; And that is, by *Resisting and Striving*, both are Military Terms, expressing Fortitude of Mind, in Resolution and Execution, and necessarily suppose vigorous Attacks, such as in Face of open Battel, wherein we are to fight for our Lives and Souls. From this Text,

Observe *First*, The Lords People have a fighting Life of it in this World, attended with *Striving, Resisting and Blood*. 149

Observe *2d*. That *Sin* is the grand Enemy against which they are still to be in a fighting Posture. Against *Sin*, says the Text.

Observe *3d*. That who so would be faithful and good Soldiers of Christ in fighting his Battels, they must lay their Account with the sharpest and sorest of Tribulations, even *Blood, Sword, Torture, Sake, Fagot and Fire*.

Observe *4th*. That any thing below this Treatment Believers meet with, should be accounted the Fruit of Divine Tenderness, Mercy and Compassion.

Observe *5th*. That it is highly dishonourable to God, to faint in the Cause of Christ and the Gospel, under lesser Trials and Sufferings, when we are advertised there are greater to be undergone on the same account.

I return to the first, which is from the Words in general.

Observe *1st*. That God's People have a fighting Life here; it is interwoven with a variety of Attacks; Yea, it is one continued Conflict their whole Life long.

I shall *First*, Prove this Note. 2ly, Shew who are the People of God's Enemies with whom they fight? 3ly, What is the Ground of this Conflict, what do they fight for? 4ly, How come these Enemies so to oppose Believers? 5ly, Improve the Whole.

First, The Truth of this Doctrine appears, 1. From these Things to which Believers Life in this World is compared, as, 10 bearing the burden in the heat of the day, Matth. 20. 12. 10 running a race, Gal. 5. 7. 1 Cor. 9. 24. 10 striving to enter in at the strait gate, Luke 13. 24. 10 wrestling, Ephes. 6. 12. 10 fighting for the victory, 2 Tim. 4. 7. And in the Text, 10 resisting unto blood, which is expressive of all, and says plainly, that Believers to their Dying-day must fight against their Spiritual Foes.

Secondly, They are certified and warned this shall be their Lot, 2 Tim. 3. 12. *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution*. John 16. 33. *In the world you shall have tribulation*.

Thirdly,

Sermans upon

Thirdly, The Spirit of God defends Believers as Soldiers who are to engage such Spiritual Adversaries, Rev. 12. 7. Michael and his angels fought: The Saints are Christ's Army, they have him as the captain of their Salvation, Heb. 2. 10. Isa. 44. 4. I will be to them as a Father, they have the whole Armour of God, Eph. 6. 11-13. If they use it, they may be safe from all Hazard in the Warfare, they have their Charges defrayed, 1 Cor. 9. 7. Who goes a warfare on his own charges; Yea, they are sure of the Victory, Rev. 3. 21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on his throne.

Fourthly, Saints are commanded to Fight, 1 Tim. 6. 12. To stand fast in the faith, to fight the good fight, to keep the faith, to keep the faith, 1 Cor. 16. 3. to resist the devil, James 4. 7. This makes it evident their whole Life is a Conflict.

Fifthly, When they are distressed by the Attacks of their Adversaries, they call to Heaven for help, Psal. 35. 10. Plead my cause O Lord with them that strive with me, fight against them that fight against me, Psal. 142. 6. Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low, deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.

Sixthly, I proposed to shew who are the People of God's Enemies with whom they fight: Now, tho' the Saints be blameless as sheep among wolves, Matth. 10. 16. Yet their Innocence doth not defend them from being attacked by their Adversaries. For

First, The Devil is their grand Enemy whom they are called to resist steadfastly in the faith, 1 Peter 5. 8. And to resist against principalities and powers, and the ruler of the darkness of this world: Tho' Satan flatter his Bond-slaves, yet he is their chief Enemy, even when all is at quiet and at rest, Luke 22. 28.

Secondly, The World of evil and wicked Men, and the things of the World, 1 John 2. 16. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world. Pleasure, Riches and Ambition, are great Snakes to the Saints.

Thirdly, Their own selves are their great Enemy, their own flesh lusts war against the soul, 1 Peter 2. 11. He is a noble Soldier and fights well, that subdues himself, Prov. 16. 32. He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city. Satan's bosom friends are in our own Bowels.

Fourthly, I am to tell you what the Saints Spiritual Enemies fight for; **First,** For the truth committed to the Saints, Jude verse 3. Ye must contend lest you be robbed of this Jewel; Satan the father of lies John 8. 44. began with this as the first Temptation to persuade innocent Man to doubt of the Truths of God, Gen. 3. 1. 2ly, They fight to deprive us of Righteousness and Holiness; Paul says to Elimas the Sorcerer, Thou child of the devil, the enemy of all Righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of God? Satan had the Confidence to tempt our Lord to the grossest wickedness, Matt. 4. 1. What then will he not tempt his followers to do? 3ly, They fight for their precious Life, Deut. 32. 47. Prov. 6. 26. 4ly, They endeavour to make the Saints make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, 1 Tim. 1. 19. 5ly, To rob you of Christian Liberty; therefore is the Exhortation given, Gal. 5. 1. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 6ly, They fight to deprive Saints of the Joys of Heaven, and shut them down to eternal Misery, 1 Pet. 4. 3. Your adversary the devil is as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

Fifthly, I proposed to shew why the Saints Enemies so oppose them? **Answer first,** From Hatred against God and his Glory, John 15. 18. If the world hate you, ye know it because I have hated the world before I hated you. 2ly, From a rooted Prejudice against godly Men, the old hatred not extinguished, Gen. 3. 15. I will put enmity between the seed of the woman, and between thy seed.

Hebrews XII. *Paraphrase* 4.

75

Jeel. Galat. 3. 28. But when he that was born after the flesh persecuted him, that warrior after the spirit, so is it now, *gib.* From Envy, because God is good to them. *Gen.* 4. 4. 7. The Lord had respect to Abel and his offering, but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had no respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. *4ly.* Because Believers will not run to the same Excess of Riot with them. *Nebuchadnezzar* was offended with the three Children, *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego*, because they would not worship his golden Image, *Dan.* 3. 18, 19. *1 Pet.* 4. 4. They think it strange that ye run not to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.

5ly. From a false Apprehension, that the Godly are Enemies to their Temporal Concerns, so *Herod* looked on Christ as Enemy to his Kingdom, *Math.* Chapter second: And *Haman* was wroth with *Mordecai*, because he bowed not, nor did him Reverence. *Esther* 3. 5. *6ly.* Because the holy Conviction of Believers condemns them. *1 John* 2. 12. *Cain* slew his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Use first. From this Doctrine we may infer, First, That where there is no Conflict and Fight, there Religion is to be suspected. *Psal.* 35. 19. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. *Jer.* 48. 11. *Zeph.* 1. 12. Inference 24. The Godly must resolve on an uneasy Life in the World, he must fight while he lives: It is true there is a rest remaining for the People of God. *Heb.* 4. 9. but it is not in this World, *Micah* 2. 10. This is not your rest, because it is polluted. The Lord will shortly bruise Satan under your feet, but not just now.

Use second of Exhortation. Christians, you are fair set in the field, so that ye biteave your selves as good Soldiers of Jesus Christ, see your Adversaries, and set against them vigorously: First, Fight so as to resist the devil, *1 Pet.* 5. 8, 9. So as to oppose fleshly lusts: *that war against the soul,* *1 Pet.* 2. 11. These must be mortified, *Rom.* 8. 13. *Coloss.* 3. 5. Hearken not to the alluring proposals of the wicked World, The covet of this World, *the love of riches shall the World, and is becoming unfruitful,* *Mark* 4. 19.

Secondly. Be very watchful, *1 Pet.* 5. 8. Be vigilans, the Secure are near to Ruine: like the Men of *Luz*, *Judges* 18. 27. Tares are sown while Men are asleep: tho' you overcome your Lusts once, they will be on you again: Therefore watch, *First.* Over thy own Heart, it is deceived above all things, *Jer.* 17. 9. Keep thine own vineyard well, *Song.* 1. 6. *2ly.* Watch over thine Enemies, to view their Motions, to see where the Hazard lies, that thou may be active to escape it. *3ly.* Watch for advantageous Opportunities of Success, *Col.* 4. 2. *4ly.* Watch over thy Senses: *Job* made a Covenant with his eyes, Chapter 31. Verse 1. *David* says, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue, and in *Psal.* 141. 2. prays, Set a watch O Lord before my mouth, keep the door of my lips. *5ly.* Take heed of the first Risings of Sin, *Achan* first saw and then coveted the Wedge of Gold, *Josh.* Chapter seventh. *6ly.* Watch over thy Conversation, lest Sinners intice thee.

Direction third. Put on the whole armour of God, *Eph.* 6. 11. The Girdle of Sincerity, the Truth, the Breast-plate of Righteousness, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Hope, the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, are most necessary in this Christian Conflict.

Fourthly. Be not intangled with the affairs of the world, *2 Tim.* 2. 4. Be not like *Moses*, who was cumbered about many things, *Luke* 10. 41. nor like *Demas*, who forsook Christ, having loved the present World, *2 Tim.* 4. 10.

Fifthly. Be temperate and sober, *1 Pet.* 4. 8. *Luke* 21. 34. And take heed to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the care of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Sixthly.

Slowly, Put on Fortitude, Resolution and Courage, *Prov. 28. 1. The righteous are bold as a lion. Acts 20. 24. None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to my self, that I may finish my course with joy.*

Seventhly, Look unto Jesus the captain and leader of your salvation, *Heb. 12. 2. Look to him for Command and Direction; For Example, 1 John 2. 6. For Help and Assistance, 2 Chron. 20. 12. And for a blessed Issue, when the Field is intirely fought, that then you may have lasting Peace.*

To press you to this Duty, I shall suggest a few Motives; *First*, There was never such a Prize fought for, *An inheritance incorruptible, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.* 2ly, It is for your Life, *Deut. 32. 47. It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life: You fight not only for Estate and Honour, your spiritual Foes seek for your Life and eternal Ruine.* 3ly, Resist and your Foes will flee, *James 4. 7. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.* 4ly, If you resist not, you will be Slaves and Captives at Satans will, *2 Tim. 2. 26.* 5ly, Ye are fighting against foiled Enemies, *Psal. 68. 18. Christ trailed them at his Chariot wheels when he went up in Triumph. He hath spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly triumphing over them in the cross.* 6ly, You have noble Help, Christ will teach your hands to war, and your fingers to fight. 7ly, You shall be more than conquerors through him that loved you, *Rom. 8. 37. At last ye shall lay by your Armour, and go in Triumph about the Throne of Glory for ever and ever.*

Observe second, That Sin is the grand Enemy against which you are still to be in a fighting Posture, *Striving against Sin*, says the Text. There is red War proclaimed betwixt Sin and Believers, *Gal. 5. 17. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.* First, I shall premise some Considerations to clear this Doctrine. 2ly, Enquire what are the Grounds of the Quarrel betwixt these two Enemies? 3ly, What it is makes the Believer strive against it? 4ly, If Sin may Conquer and Foil the Believer? and how far? 5ly, Why the Lord suffers his own People to be thus Foiled? 6ly, How differs the Degree of Conquest Sin obtains over the Godly, from that it obtains over the Wicked? Lastly, Improve the Whole.

For understanding this Doctrine, I premise these Considerations, *First*, That Man in Nature is an Enemy to God, and God to him, and all on the account of Sin, *Coloss. 1. 21. Eph. 2. 3.* 2ly, That free Grace, in Commiseration of Man's sad Estate, hath provided a noble Out-gate through Christ offered in the Gospel. 3ly, That after Christ is embraced by Faith, and Grace is infused, it is not alone in the Soul, it dwells beside bad Neighbours, a Body of Sin and Death. 4ly, The Believer (for this is his new Name) hath proclaimed VVar against Sin, as his irreconcilable Enemy, and will admit of no Parley nor Truce therewith, but intends to resist to the blood, *Striving against sin*; this is his Uptaking-exercise. 5ly, Sometimes Sin may gain the Upper-hand of him, lay him on his back, *iniquities may prevail against him, Psal. 64. 3. Rom. 7. 15.* 6ly, Whatever be his Weakness in fighting, yet he is denominate from the better Part, he is on Grace's side and not on Sin's; and so being in Christ's Muster-roll, his Captain comes obliged for him, that he shall carry the Victory at last, and he may stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

2ly, I proposed to shew what are the Grounds of the Quarrel betwixt these two great Combatants, Sin and the Believer? For Answer, They have their several Grounds in their mutual Arguings and Reasonings, each for themselves; a few whereof I shall suggest.

First,

Hebrews XII. Verse 4.

82

First, Sin hath to say for it self, I am a natural Residenter, I came to the World with the Man; Grace is but a Stranger, and a new Incomer: Therefore away with it, and hearken to me. Now, What hath Grace to answer to this? If my Enemy Sin argue for Antiquity, I will carry it, for God made Man Perfect; Sin is the new Incomer, brought in by its Father the Devil, it his Plenishing, who himself also fell by it.

Secondly, Says Sin, Man, thy Temper and Disposition will agree better with me than with the other Party Grace: I am content to live quietly and peaceably with thee, but Grace will breed constant Disturbance: Therefore away with it. To this Grace Answereth, *First*, I am not to measure my Duty by my Inclination of heart, for that is accursed, tell me not of that, but my Master's Command, *To the End and Testimony*, that is the Rule. *2ly*, As to thy living in Peace, it is partly False, partly True; False, because thou art never at Peace while Believers breathe, but close unweariedly at work; True, in respect of that spiritual Drowsiness and Lethargy, whereby thou intoxicates the Soul sleeping in the Lap of *Dalilah*, till the Pit be digged for it: Thou art the strong Man armed, keeping the House, and all is at Ease. *3ly*, As for the Disturbance I make, says Grace's Party, thou art the Cause of it, the Soul should live in most perfect Peace and Satisfaction with me, were not thou the Troubler of *Israel*.

Third Argument, Why would thou be Singular, Man, dwell not I with all the Children of Men, and they are but few that offer to beat up my Quarters, and turn me out of Doors, and even where thou art, there I lodge: So I am sole Umpire, Why then should thou contend with me, cast down thy Weapons, and own thy self conquered? I confess, says Grace, thou has large Territories, it is but a little Flock I claim to. Yet *2ly*, Tho' few, yet these I have in my Instructions to seize on, I will come in a Day of God's Power in them; and pluck them out of thy Hands, as Fire-brands out of the Fire, and un-setter them of thy Chains. Therefore *3ly*, Thou art not sole Umpire, thou reign in the Children of Disobedience; Yet, where I am, the Crown is plucked off thy Head, and thou conquered. *4ly*, As for my yielding and laying down my Weapons, that I will never do, till thou be fairly fought off the field, and I more than Conqueror through him that loved me, *Rom. 8. 37.*

Fourth Argument, Says Sin, I have a strong Backing, a great Master before whom the stoutest Champions are fallen: How defended thou *David*, *Peter*, and others, therefore yield? Grace Answereth, *First*, If thou argue from Potency of thy Master, I gain the Cause, thine rules the Air only, and that but by Permission of my Lord, who does what he pleases among the armies in heaven, and inhabitants of the earth. *2ly*, How easily did my Master wrangle himself out of thy Grips, when thou was so presumptuous as to chafe a Combat with him, *Mat. Chap. 4. And he hath destroyed the works of the devil*, *1 John 3. 8. 2. 15.* *3ly*, Stout Champions indeed have been, are, and shall be overthrown by him; bravest Gallants on Earth, who are Volunteers in his Servitude, whose Reward from him at last shall be to be hewed down by him as Fodder for Hell Fire. *4ly*, But tho' some in whom I lodge, have been foiled by thee, yet they recovered their Ground again, and at last were Victorious over thee; so *David* went off the Stage of Time, with that sweet Song, *2 Sam. 23. 5. Altho my house be not so with God, yet he hath made his Master's Cause with his Blood.*

Fifth Argument, Says Sin, By Threats I will drive thee to yield, and by Promises I will persuade thee: Thou shalt never get a peaceable Hour while in the World, I

shall be a constant Thro' in thy Flesh, and for all my Agents on the Top, and thou shalt be a Wonder in Israel, if thou yield not to Sin. But if thou yield, and let me reign, I will promise thee Profits and Pleasures, the avaricious Man shall get the World, the Ambitious Honour, the Drunkard his Cups and Comerads, the debauched Man his Whores; therefore lay down thy Arms and submit to me. To this Grace *Answer*, Big words will not fear me; as for thy threatnings, I value them not, thou art but a wicked Spirit chained and bound by my Lord and Master: Whereas thou sayst thou wilt give me no Peace in this World, the Lord keep me from holding my Peace of thee, O Sin! I love to see thee like thyself, playing the Enemy against me, and not signing Friendship. I have a Bond for solid and lasting Peace laid up, namely the V Word on which God hath called me to hope, *Psalm 119. 49.* My Redeemer hath promised, *In me shall have peace.* *Answer second*, As for thy alluring Promises, they are as Apples of Sodom to me, please Children with these Tuffles of Profits and Pleasures, they shall not catch me.

First, Your Profits have great Losses in their Bosom; for tho' a Man gain the whole world and lose his own soul, where is his Profit, what will the Soul have to talk of Profit, when thou drags it down to everlasting Flames, and becomes its Tormentor for ever? VVhat then shall the avaricious Man make of his Riches, or the ambitious Man of his Honours? But great is the gain of godliness, both in this life, and also in that which is to come.

Secondly, Your Pleasures are but for a Moment, and leave an everlasting Sting behind them; But I have more durable Pleasures, that last to Eternity, in his presence is fulness of joy. VVould I make such an Exchange with thee, sing, if I fight till the Field be won, *Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness*: My Coronation day is coming, therefore, *I will resist to the blood, striving against sin.*

Thirdly, I proposed to shew what it is more particularly in Sin that makes the Believer strive against it. More generally, The Believer hates Sin, because it is the worst of all Evils in the World, nothing so terrible and fearful to the Believer as Sin; for, *First*, The worst thing beside Sin can only reach the external Part, Body, Estate and Name; but Sin affects the Soul, stains, pollutes, yea damns it; therefore the Believer resolves, I will strive to the Blood against it. *2ly*, All other Evils are bounded within Time; Poverty, Sickness, Disgrace shall end; but the Evil of Sin hath no End. *3ly*, Because it makes the Man the immediate Object of God's Displeasure; whereas under all other Evils he may enjoy the Love of God, a poor Man may be Rich in Faith, and Heir of the Kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him, *James 2. 5.* *4ly*, No other evil but Sin will marr your future Happiness; if thou be Holy, thou shalt be Happy in spite of all other Evils, yea in this World they cannot separate thee from the Love of God, *Rom. 8. 37.* *5ly*, Other Evils are only injurious to a Man's self; but Sin wrongs God, it is an Enemy to his very Being, *Psalm 14. 1.* and contrair to his Holy Nature. *6ly*, Sin is altogether Evil, and only Evil, for other Evils may prove Medicinal to the Soul, either by preventing of Sin, *1 Cor. 11. 32.* We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the World, or for the purging away of Sin, *1 Jo. 27. 9.* or for the improving and bettering our Graces, *Rom. 8. 28.* *Psalm 119. 69.* *7ly*, Sin robs the Soul of inward Peace and Serenity; whereas a Man may be under Evils of Affliction and enjoy sweet Peace, *2 Cor. 1. 12.* When Paul was in a Prison, his Conscience puts him in a Palace, *Manasse's Fetters* brought him to Humiliation and Repentance, *2 Chron. 33. 12.* but *Johns Sin* brings him to Desperation. *8ly*, Other Evils are God's

own Creatures, he owns them all. *Amos 2. 6. Is there wrath in the Cloud, and the Lord hath not done it; but Sin is an Embryo bred in the Devil's Bowels. John 7. 14. 26. In other Evils, Man hath notable Support, and Supply. 1. Thim. 3. 9. In all their Afflictions, he was afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saved them; but under the Evil of Sin, does he pity the Creature; God, Angels and Creatures, all in array against it.*

More particularly, The Believer holds Sin for his Enemy. *First*, Because of the Villeness of it's Nature, it is expressed by the worst of things, as the Vomit of a Dog, a Plague, a Gangren, a menstruous Cloth. It is exceeding sinful. *Rom. 7. 13. 12. 26. Because it is the greatest act of Madness and Folly. Luke 12. 20. Thou fool, this night thy Soul shall be required of thee: what a madness is it to prefer the pleasures of Sin to the pleasures of Heaven? 3^{ly}, Because it brings the Believers Soul in greatest Servitude to the Devil, the worst of Tyrants, so bad, that the greatest Fear will be when your Reward comes a dealing. 4^{ly}, Because it is the only Rise and Cause of all other Evils, it damned the whole World, in the Sentence of the Law, it drowned the old World, it burnt Sodom, it is the Cause of all personal Evils, Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal; of all National Evils, as Sword and Pestilence, it laid Jerusalem in Ruine, and brought many other particular Nations and Churches to Ruine. 5^{ly}, Because the Cloud of their inward Sighs and Groans, because of Sins prevailing. *Psa. 51. Rom. 7. 24. 26. By their Sufferings to word it: Daniel is content to be thrown into the Den of Lions, the three Children into the Furnace, of Fire, Job and Job into Stocks; they esteemed it a greater Enemy than Poverty and Disgrace. Job. 1. 24. 25. greater than Death. Rev. 12. 11. They loved not their lives to the Death: Christum said to the Empreiss Eudoria, when threatened, I fear nothing but Sin. Yea they esteem it greater than Hell, it kindles these Flames which can punish Sin, but not purge it away, Hell had never been, if Man had not sinned.**

Fourthly, I am to enquire if Sin may Conquer the Believer, and how far? For Answer to the first Part of this Question, consider *First*, Sin in itself, as to the Matter and Nature of it. 2^{ly}, As to the Manner of committing it. 3^{ly}, Now in the 1st Consideration, I know no Sin, except the unpardonable Sin, but the Believer, when left to himself to grapple with it on his own Strength, may be foiled by it, and fall into it; as *First*, Idolatry, and that in the grossest kind, 1 Kings 11. 4. 5. Solomon, after the Lord appeared to him twice, his Heart was drawn away, and went after Heathenish Idols. 2^{ly}, Apostacy, Peter cursed and swore he never knew his Lord and Master. 3^{ly}, Murder and Adultery, as David, 2 Sam. 11. 4. 4^{ly}, Persecution, Aza imprisoned the Prophet Hanani for reproving him, 2 Chron. 16. 10. 5^{ly}, Drunkenness and Incest, as Noah and Lot; yea they may seem hardened after Commission of these Sins for a time. So that it is evident, this Enemy may foil the Believer, and that if we consider, *First*, It's Subtility which qualifies it for our Overthrow, it suddenly undermines by fair Pretexs. 2^{ly}, Consider the strong backing it hath within us, the Traitor is latent in our own Bosom, in the unrenewed Part of the Soul, here lies it's Strength. 3^{ly}, It appears strong from it's Effects, whether in respect of external Judgments, or of inward Heart-Influating Plagues; yea Sin provokes the Lord to take the Rod and lash the Believer, *Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32.* 4^{ly}, Consider the continual and assiduous Diligence of it, still dragging the Believer at the Heels, in order to catch him; all places are full of this Enemy, Beds, Closets, Fields, Churches; yea it assaulted Peter in the Mount of Transfiguration.

The Second Part of the Question is, How far the Believer may be conquered by Sin? In order to the answering of this Query, I

Premise a few Considerations. *First*, All Men by Nature are dead and incapable of resisting this Enemy, *Eph. 2. 1. Dead in Sins and Trespasses*, Chap. 4. 18. *Having the Understanding darkned, being alienated from the Life of God.* 2ly, The holiest of the People of God have some deadness, tho' in one part, the Spirit, they be alive; yet in the Flesh they are dead, *Song. 5. 2. I sleep, but my Heart waketh*, there is a sleeping Head, tho' a waking Heart; the great Apostle Paul reckoned not as tho' *I had already perished, or were already perished*, *Rom. 7. 12. David a lively Saint prays, Quicken me, O Lord, for my Neighbour's sake*, *Psalm. 143. 11.* 3ly, The dearest of all the People of God have some Life, tho' they may lose their Liveliness, yet not their Life, the vital Principle still remains, tho' the Exercise of it be decayed, *1 John 3. 9. His seed remaineth in him.* 4ly, Consider this is a very ticklish Subject, dangerous if we stand not in answer thereto. For, *First*, It may be a Rock of Offence to bystanders dead in Sin; true it is, say they, I am overcome, my Heart is like a Stone in Prayer, I am full of Unbelief and Security. Yet my Breathing on the Minister, for he gives me Hope, saying, that Believers may be just like me, hence I conclude I may be of that Number, and so hope for Safety and Security. 2ly, It is dangerous; for hereby many may encourage themselves to return to their Captivity, who once were on the way to get free, they grow careless, saying, What need I be at pains, I am a Child of God still, for thus many Believers be, says the Minister. I'll tell you first, such Improvers of this Doctrine have it writ in their Foreheads, they are deep in Satan's Servitude, let only such take Comfort from it, who are humbled under their overcome Case. 3ly, I premise this, tho' dangerous, yet a necessary Point, the People of God had never more need to hear and be warned of it than in our Day; it may tend to pluck some of them as Brands out of the Fire; and therefore not to be omitted, if Thousands of Reprobates break their Neck on it, it is their own Fault, we caution them against it.

Now in Answer to the Question proposed, Saints may be so far overcome with Sin, as, *First*, To lose their Affections, which be as Wings of the Soul, and so cannot soar in Duties: What a poor heartless, lifeless Creature was *Achan*, *2 Chron. 16. 10.* when God sent his Prophet to reprove him, after he was overcome by Sin, his Affections were not stirred to repent and mourn for his Sin, but was angry with the Prophet; and when God afflicted him for his Sin, he grieved not, he sought to Physicians, and not to the Lord: So *David*, *2 Sam. 11. 25.* for nine Months, or thereby, he had neither Grief, Shame nor Sorrow for his Sin.

Secondly, So far overcome, as senseless either of Sin or Grace, as the Patriarchs in conspiring against *Joseph*, having cast him into a Ditch, O horrible and unnatural act! who would thought but this should have pierced them? No, but they sit down to eat and drink, *Gen. 37. 25.* after they had done it. So *Israel*, after their idolatrous Worship of the Golden Calf, *Exod. 32. 6.* So *David* in the former Instance had many things to aggravate his Guilt, he had Wives of his own, a Man stricken in Years, no Novice, not ignorant of God, but an old Disciple of great Experience, and once most forward for God; yet all this made him not sensible of his Sin, he was so far from it, that he laboured to father his Bastard on *Uriah*.

Thirdly, They may come to this, that the Service of God may be a Burthen to them, like these, *Mal. 1. 12, 13.* loath to go to Duty, to continue in Duty; yea wish it were over, *Gal. 6. 9.* may be ready to turn weary of Well-doing; once they were so affected!

affected with the Word, *That if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own Eyes, and given them to me,* Gal. 4. 15. but now they are ready to turn faint and weary of doing God Service.

Fourthly, Even when in a Form of Duty, your Hearts talk with other things in time thereof, so that they are silenced with the very Noise.

Fifthly, So far as there is but a little Spunk of Grace remains, and *what remains is ready to die*, Rev. 2. 2. Know this, *First*, By want of Love to Duty, your Hearts distract and run wild, when you face it, so much of Satan's Image is put on. *2ly*, Know it by your great Formality: when dragged to Duty, every Word drops down at distance from another carelessly and indifferently. *3ly*, In all they do, Custom and Fashion prevails beyond Conscience and Affection. Thus far may the People of God be overcome by Sin. I proceed.

Fifthly, To enquire why the Lord suffers his People to be thus foiled by Sin? *Answer*, It proceeds.

First, From a culpable Cause in them. *2ly*, From a sovereign End in God.

For the *First*, They may be thus overcome, *First*, From the Weakness of their Grace, which while hereaway is under great Imperfection, and therefore not beyond Hazard of being overcome by so strong a Party as Sin. *2ly*, From their Security, when to do with such a potent Enemy, and not on your Guard, no wonder ye be foiled: An eminent Instance of this see, *2 Sam. Chap. 11. David* went up to the Battlement of his House, without ground, and sent his Eyes a roving, and what came of it? *3ly*, From Rashness and Self-confidence, they go out against this Enemy on their own Strength, and this provokes God to give them their own Weight: *Peter* was very brisk to walk on the Sea, *Matth. 14. 29. 30.* but presently he gave the murther Cry, *Lord save me*. And again before our Lord's Sufferings, he was so confident of himself, as to say, *Though all Men forsake thee, yet will not I,* and yet he was the first decayed him. *4ly*, From their Unacquaintedness with the way of living by Faith, and close and constant Dependance on God in every Step for Furniture: They know not what it is to practise that Duty, *As ye have received the Lord Jesus, so walk in him,* Col. 2. 6. This would be of notable Advantage, *Phil. 4. 13. I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me.* *5ly*, The Christian's being overcome, flows from Peevishness and Niggardiness in the Service of God: There be many Duties we have no express Scripture for, as, how oft and how long I shall Pray, Read, Meditate, Examine my self, and do the like Duties. Now a Man who would be more than a Conqueror of his Enemies, will rather overdo than underdo in these; *Phil. v. 21. Having confidence in thy Obedience, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.* *Exod. 36. 5. The People bring much more than enough for the service of the Work which the Lord commanded to make:* So if God bid thee Pray rather than fail, thou wilt with *David* pray seven times a Day.

Secondly, Believers being overcome by Sin, flows from some sovereign Ends of our great God: As *First*, To humble his People, and prevent Pride in them; hereby he brings them to see further into their own Hearts, and the Corruptions thereof, and they are made capable of receiving more Grace, *James 4. 6. Deut. 8. 16. Therefore walk humbly with thy God.*

Secondly, To let them see they stand meerly by Grace, not only for new Pardon, but for new Strength to encounter a fresh this Enemy; for had a Man never so many Gifts, yea Graces and Enlargements, it is not by these he stands, he is obliged only to free Grace, to the good Will and Favour of God, *Rom. 9. 16. It is not of him that willeth,*

of him that *runneth*, but of God that *showeth Mercy*. 3ly, That hereby others may be instructed, *Rom. 11. 20. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by Faith; be not high minded, but fear.* 4ly, To teach them to be Mild, Meek and Compassionate to others that are overcome, and out of Love to endeavour to gain them to their former Stability, *Gal. 6. 1. Titus 3. 2, 3.* By what is said, we see Sin may foil the Believer, and how far, and whence this flows. I proceed,

Sixthly, To enquire how differs this Degree of Conquest, this Enemy Sin obtains over the Godly, from that it obtains over the Wicked? *Answer*, Tho' there be no Difference as to the Matter of Sins committed, as I shewed before, yet the Difference lies in the Manner of committing it. As,

First, However Sin may foil the Believer, yet he hath still the Habits of Grace, tho' not drawn out to Exercise, *1 John 3. 9. The seed of God remains in him.*

Secondly, They have an anointing from the Holy One, that abides in them, and reaches them all things: Their Eyes be opened, whereby they look on God and Christ, Heaven, Holiness, Sin, Hell, the World, and all it's Pleasures in another manner than the Wicked: True it is, by Sin this Eye may be greatly dazled, and this Unction weakened, but it can never be quite taken away.

Thirdly, Even when the Believer is overcome, he cannot sin with the whole Bent of the Will as the Wicked do, the Spirit is still opposing the Flesh, *Gal. 5. 17. Rom. 7. 24, 25.* For, *First*, He never sins, but it is against the standing Purpose, Resolution and Determination of his Heart, but it is not so with the Ungodly, the Drunkard, the Swearer, the Whoremonger, and others of that kind, resolve deliberately to go on in their sinful Courses, but the Believer says, *I will never forget thy Precepts, for with them thou hast quickned me.* *Psal. 17. 3. I am purposed that my Mouth shall not transgress.* 2ly, He never sins but against the Study and Composure of his Soul, *Psal. 119. 112. I have inclined mine Heart to perform thy Statutes always, even unto the end.* 3ly, A Believer never becomes a Volunteer in Satan's Drudgery; even when overcome, there is something or other hinders him from full and voluntary consenting to Sin; as, *First*, If he sin, it is sometimes out of Ignorance, he knows not such a thing offends God, or else he would not do it for a World, as *1 Kings 13. 17, 18.* 2ly, Tho' against Knowledge, yet through Inconsideration, *Psal. 116. 11, I said in my haste, all men are liars: A Man may do that in haste, which when he comes to think on, he would rather cut off his right Hand as do it.* 3ly, Grievous and violent Passions make the Action less voluntary, tho' done with some Deliberation: A Man in Passion will do Things his Will is absolutely opposite to, Stob his dearest Friend; in such a Hurry was *David* in the Matter of *Uriah*, and *Peter* when he denyed his Master. 4ly, Tho' there be no Passions, yet there may be violent strong Temptations and Impulsions to Sin, which make it less voluntary; for a Man at the same time may have a Will to resist these Temptations, but they being stronger, prevail and overcome. Thus you have a third Difference explained, the Believer cannot sin willingly and deliberately.

A fourth Difference, The Believer when overcome, he will never make a Trade of Sin, as ill Men do, *1 John 3. 8. He that committs sin is of the devil: That is He whose work is to commit Sin.*

Fifthly, The Believer cannot Sin with Delight, when he is overcome, the Pleasures of Sin have no Relish with him.

Sixthly, He is never so soiled, but there is an Aptness in him to rise and recover his Ground again, he will not continue wallowing in the Mire; but will up, no sooner Conscience sets home his Guilt, but he gets to his Feet.

Seventhly,

Servably, However overcome, there remains some Spark of Love and secret Hankering after God, *Jonah 2. 4.* Yet will I look again toward thy holy temple : After *Jonah* was sadly foiled by the Enemy, had run away from God and rebelled against him, yet there is a secret Back-look to God at the lowest Ebb.

Use First, Of Caution, Is Sin such an Enemy to the Believer, and may it so far fall and overcome him? as is said; Let no Man from this encourage himself in an evil way, saying, It is no matter I sin now and then, Swear, Lie, and Drink, for the Minister tells us, the People of God may come the same length; This way of Arguing is of Satan, *Rom. 6: 1.* Jude verse 4. We never find a godly Man reason so, it is quite opposite to the gracious Principles whereby he is acted; Yea, such as do so, it plainly says they are yet in the gall of bitterness, and band of iniquity. Therefore, when we look to the Lives of Noah, Abraham, Lot, David, and other Saints, and read their Fallings, we are to make another Use of it. Namely,

Use Second, To excite us to double Pains, and watching against this potent and prevalent Enemy; If these Cedars have fallen before him, how shall such a Twig as I escape the Storm? Did David and Peter fall, how shall the like of me stand? They had an hundred times more Grace than I, a better Heart, Lusts more mortified, and performed Duties with greater Zeal; And yet they did fall, how should I take Heed, Watch, Pray, Depend on Christ; that he who preserved my Soul from death, may preserve my Feet from falling, *Psal. 56. 13.*

Use Third, Of Consolation to the People of God, who have been thus foiled by this Enemy, they are mourning in Captivity by the rivers of Babel, their harps are hung on the willows, they fear they shall never get up again: Be comforted, there is yet Hope in Israel, *1 John 2. 1.* If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Many such Brands has he pluck'd out of the Fire, and set up as Beacons to them that should hereafter believe, *1 Tim. 1. 15.* Therefore sit not down wallowing your selves with sad thoughts of your over-come Case, but turn in to strong holds, to the Store-house for Furniture; Is not his Name Jesus, and Salvation his Employment? Having the Inditement in the one Hand against your selves, and Christ's Promise in the other, ye shall be heard, and your Souls filled with holy Fortitude, causing you to resist to the blood striving against sin.

Observe Third, That who-ever would be Dutiful in fighting the Battels of the Lord, and behave as good Soldiers of Christ, they must lay their Account with sharpest and sorest of Tribulations, even unto Blood, Sword, Torture, Stake and Fire.

For clearing and confirming this Doctrine, I shall inquire, *First*, How it appears our Duty to forecast these Trials? *2ly*, Why we must forecast them? *3ly*, How comes a kind God to put such Gall in Believers Cup? *4ly*, What kind of Trials and Tribulations they are to forecast? *5ly*, What our Behaviour under each of these ought to be? *6ly*, What Differences are betwixt God's Way in these with his own People, and with the Wicked? And then shall make Improvement.

Enquiry First, How it appears that these Trials shall be the Lot of God's People, and that it is their Duty to forecast them? *Answer First*, Because our Lord hath warned them it shall be so, *Math. 10. 16.* Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, verse 17. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. *John 16. 2.* They shall put you out of the synagogues, yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service, and these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me. *2ly*, Our Lord's Ministers from

from their Experiences, have seconded their Master in warning others: Paul being stoned till he seemed dead at *Lystra*, in his next Sermon at *Lystra*, he cries, That through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God, *Act. 14. 22.* 3ly, It is evident from a whole cloud of witnesses; From *Abel*, *Gen. 4. 9.* to this day, *Heb. 11. 36, 37, 38, 39.* 4ly, From our Condition while in this Life, we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, *Psalm. 119. 59.* *Heb. 11. 13.* Such may expect Difficulties and Mal-treatment; *Pen and vial*, *Psalm. 39. 5.* Our Life is like a Ship tossed with Waves, *Matth. 8. 24.* We must endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, *2 Tim. 2. 3.* 5ly, Our Lord and Master hath enjoined us to be in Readiness to encounter with the Evil-day, *Eph. 6. 13.* Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil-day, and having

Enquiry Second, Why must the Lords People lay their Account with these Trials? Answer First, This is our first Condition, in our Indenture and Contract with Christ, Take up thy cross and follow me, *Matth. 16. 24.* 2ly, Because, if we lay not our Account with such Trials, nothing can put us beyond Suspicion of Hypocrisy, and that our Heart is not right with God, *Matth. 10. 37, 38.* He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: And he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. That is, He that hath not laid Account to part with all, and suffer the Loss of all these things for Christ, when called thereto, is not worthy the Name of my Disciple. 3ly, This is necessary, because it will help us better to bear these Crosses, when we and they charge; The Believer says, This is no Surprise, I laid my Account with it long since. 4ly, Because, tho' ye should not be put to the utmost of these Tribulations, yet, if you forecast and lay your Account with them, tho' you die in your Bed, the Lord will reckon, as if ye had endured them. 5ly, This is the way to deaden and mortifie your Affections to the World, and loose them from it, so as ye may easily too part with all, and endure Hardness when it comes to the Trial. 6ly, Hereby you will be reconciled to the Cross, so as to be denied to your own Life, when it comes to be in Danger, *Rev. 12. 11.* They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and

Enquiry Third, How comes a kind God to put such Gall in Believers Cup? Answer, It is not from Want of Love and Respect to his dear Children: But Positively, It is to bring about and crown in them a notable Design of Love he hath on foot in all these things, and into this they shall all ultimately resolve. As First, That Occasion may be given to God to disclose his Power, Faithfulness, Goodness and Care, by letting out the Effects thereof under Tribulation, that then his Consolations may Super-abound, *2 Cor. 1. 4.* 2ly, To correct your Enormities in Love, to prevent your going on to Ruine, *Jer. 35. 11.* I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee, tho' I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee; yet will I not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished. 3ly, They are God's Gold and Silver to be cast in this refining Pot and Furnace of Tribulation, in order to their being fully tried: It is not all Gold that glitters among us, there is a searching Storm coming, that will blow many a vain Professor's gilded Feathers quite from him, *James 1. 12.* 4ly, To disclose the Mystery of Sin, which formerly they were ignorant of, *1 Pet. 1. 7.* 5ly, To disclose the Mystery of Sin, which formerly they were ignorant of, *2 Chron. 33. 11, 12.* When Manasseh was in fetters in Babylon, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly. 6ly, To awaken them from the Security with which they are oft overtaken, *Psal. 30. 7.* 6ly, In order to sound Conviction and through

Conversion,

Hebrews XII. Verse 4.

89

Conversion, *Psal. 119. 91. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn thy statutes.* 75. For the exercising of their Graces. *Rom. 5. 3. Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.* And quickning their Prayers. *1 Th. 5. 16. Let us, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when they chastening was upon them.* 87. To conform them to Christ, who was made perfect through sufferings. *2 Tim. 2. 12. Rom. 8. 29.* 88. To subdue and mortify the Flesh. *1 Cor. 9. 27. Wherefore I subdue my flesh, and keep it under, lest by any means I myself shall be brought under.* 89. To make a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin. *1 Cor. 11. 32. We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* 1 *Pet. 4. 1, 2. 107. To be a soure Sauce to the World's gilded Dishes, a Summons to warn you that your Rest is not here, that you must look off the Pleasures of the World to the Joys eternal in Heaven above.*

Enquiry Fourth, VWhat kind of Tribulations, Trials, and sore Pressures Believers are to forecast and lay their Account with? *Answer.* These are of three kinds, *First,* Some things certain they must meet with. *2d,* Other things probable they may meet with. *3d,* Some things possible, as Fiery Bloody Trials.

As to the *First*, If you design Heaven, it is certain and inevitable, that you must have a continued and perpetual Struggle and Fight with these three great Warrours against the Soul; *The Devil, The World, and The Flesh.*

As for Satan, from him lay your Account, *First*, That his chief Design is to rob you of your Soule, to twin you and Heaven, to cheat you of your main Treasure. *2d,* That for this end he is still on his Wing, observing all your Motions. *1 Pet. 5. 8. Going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* *3d,* He will make a part of thy self speak in his Favours, he hath an established Agent within doors, an heart desperately wicked. *4d,* He colours over his pernicious Designs, with Pretence of Love and Friendship, and customary. But the Kisses of this Enemy are very treacherous. *5d,* He will notice thy natural Complexion and Constitution and work with a Proportion to the Byas of these, presenting such Sins as are most agreeable. *6d,* He is for the sharpest Attack when thou art least looking for it, to surprise, is his greatest Policy. *7d,* He will come in with bad Reports of God to you: Forecast this Believers, and give him no Credit, for he was a Lier from the beginning.

Second Enemy with which you may have a Bloody Fight, is the *World*; From it lay Account, *First*, With Danger from Creature Comforts and Enjoyments, lest they take more than their own Room: If you ask, How shall I know that? *Answer.* 1. When it takes up more of your time; What is your Care from Morning to Evening? Is it not, what to Eat, Drink, and put on? 2. What do you most converse with? What is your Dayly Discourse about? On what do your Thoughts run through the Day? Christ or the World? 3. Are ye at a Point what to do if Christ and the World come in Competition in your Case? Can ye say farewell worldly Enjoyments, welcome Christ and his Cross. *Secondly*, Forecast Danger from the Pleasures of the World, that ye be not Sensual, by Excess in Meat, Drink, Sleep, and Apparel; This will make Religion tasteless to you, and cost you many a defeating Surfeit. *Thirdly*, Forecast the Danger of Prosperity, that the Heart be not lifted up with Pride and Vanity, and thereby become Remiss, Drowsie, Indifferent, Lukewarm, and so provoke the Lord to spue thee out of his Mouth: For 1. Remember Believers, these are but common things, whereof the Wicked enjoy the largest Share, *Psal. 73. 7. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than their hearts could wish.* 2. They are winged things, soon gone, *Prov. 23. 5. For riches*

riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away, as an eagle which hunteth. That a Christian's present State is never better, than when he is lowly; *Thou shalt find thyself in the same State, as thou art in the same State.* This is a fore-taste of their being quickly carried to Babylon, *Isa. 39. 2.* — 6. *In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.* — *Thou shalt find thyself in the same State, as thou art in the same State.* Was it not better with you in a low Condition, than now when the Gifts of your Souls are blown up, and you secure with the wind of Prosperity? Compare time with time, and let it be the Frame of thy Heart be not altered, *Psalm 13. 6. Their heart was exalted, therefore they have forgotten me.* *Jer. 22. 21. I speak to thee in the day of thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear.* — 6. *Forcast Danger from the Frowns and Glooms of the World, back'd with the several Threatnings, and these execute with extreme Barbarity: But of this afterward.*

Third Enemy common to all Christians, which will cast a bloody Fight, is the *Heart*, a secret Sink of Sin latent in the deceitful Heart, here is dangerous Work to be forecast by Believers. I shall speak a Word, First, Of the Manner of it's A Sings. 2. Of the Matter of them. As for the First, You may find a Motion of the Heart to Sin, *James 4. 2. Ye lust, and have not:* if this lustful Motion be not opposed, then, 2. The Heart will proceed to reflect on, and daily to talk with it familiarly, *Rom. 7. 7. to cover it:* If this be not killed in the Seed, follows a Third Step, a Desire to embrace it, an Inclination to comply with the Motion. Then, 4. After the Consent is obtained, Means are sought to obtain it. Next, 5. The Means being proposed, and occasion offered, there follows actual committing of the Sin, these be some Steps of Lute Conception, which when finished, brings forth Death, *James 1. 15. to prevent this, thou must take the Blood of Sin, and be it's Death.* Secondly, As to the Matter of these Evils, you have them set down in Bulk, *Matth. 15. 19. Out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, false Witnesses, Blasphemies.* From the Heart proceeds Unbelief, in departing from the living God, *Heb. 3. 12. if you kill it not, it will kill you.* From the Heart proceeds Hypocrisy, *Jah. 26. 13. An hypocrite in Heart heaps up Wrath.* From the Heart proceeds Formality, superficially trifling over Duties, this costs the Believer many a dangerous Fight. And finally, Wandering of Heart gets into some Corner, and flees from Duties. Here comes in the Believer with

This Case, I fear this be my Death, my wandering Heart has overcome me, I will fall by the hand of this *Soul* one Day, this makes me cast at all I have done. For thy Resolution, distinguish a twofold wandering of Heart, First, A voluntary and habitual Distraction, *Psalm 78. 37. Their Heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his Covenant:* This is the Case of Formalists, and proceeds from Want of a holy Bend and Inclination of Heart to God, not purposed against, nor watched over. 2. In voluntary and lamented Distractions, *Rom. 7. 21. I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me:* This proceeds from Weakness and Imperfection of Grace. To cure this, First, Watch and Pray against it, such things be not cast out but by Fasting and Prayer. 2. Maintain some spiritual Subject for Meditation through the Day in thy Solitudes. 3. Realize the awful Presence of God, *Psalm 119. 168. I have kept thy Precepts and thy Testimonies, for all my ways are before thee.* 4. Be much in heavenly Ejaculations in the Intervals of Duties, bringing in the Heart from it's Extravagancies.

Case second, There are some of these Distractions of Heart come immediately from Satan, strong high Winds and Storms raised by him, to shake and winnow the Believer; How

How shall I know if they be from my Heart, or from Satan? *Satan's* Injections are violent, like to pull down the whole Fabrick about your Ears; what comes from our own Heart is Natural, and so more calm. *25* These that are violently thrown in we most oppose, detest and hate; but we have a sort of Love to what is our own, and ready to overlook it. *26* Those which be Imperinent, and have no Connexion with what we are about, Satan will make far-fetched Connexions. *27* Such as are monstrous, hardly the Wit of Man could invent; these are his fiery Darts which he first casts in, and then charges on the Man as his own.

Second sort of Trials Believers are to forecast and lay their Accounts with, are things probable, which many have met with, and you may probably meet with. And these be either, *First*, Inward, as the ups and downs, the various turnings and windings of the religious Exercises of the People of God, under the Sense of God's deserting and withdrawing the favourable Light of his Countenance. *28* Outward Trials, as personal Afflictions and Calamities in Body, Relations, Means, and Life: Or publick of Christ: Concerning these, forecast, *First*, The alluring Promises of Honour and Preferment, if you will comply with a sinful Course. *29* Alluring Threats that ye be stript naked of all ye enjoy; and, *30* Put in the Hands of your Enemies under Custody, where your Ears ring with their horrid and bloody Oaths. *31* Under all these Sufferings, others misconstrue and reproach you. *32* That you be brought to seal the Truth with your Blood. And this leads to

The *third sort of Trials* to be forecast and resolved upon by Believers, viz. Things possible, which some have met with, and you may meet with; a Catalogue of these Paul presupposes to himself, *Rom. 8. 35. 38. 39.* Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? *Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword?* *For I am persuaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

First, Tribulation and Persecution, if you resolve to keep the Word of Christ's Patience, then lay your Account, *First*, That the Ground of the Quarrel will be thy Adherence to Christ, his Cause, and Truth. *2d*, That there will be no Parley, but that direful Dilemma proposed, *Turn, or Burn.* *3d*, That thy nearest Relations may become thy greatest Tempters, the misbelieving Wife will present her self and Children to the believing Husband, to deter him from suffering for Christ, telling him, What? *Will thou turn us to Beg, by disobeying the Laws of the Land?* *4d*, That this Heat of Persecution will be not in a Corner only, but universal, no where left to flee to, not among Neighbour Nations. The Emperor *Dioclesian's* Persecution of the Christians lasted ten Years, in which time the whole Christian World was filled with the sacred Blood of the Martyrs, *Suspiciens Severus*, *Lib. 2.* *5d*, Enemies may rack their Inventions to make thy Trials and Torments terrible. *Eusebius* in the 8th Book of his Ecclesiastick History, reports what dreadful Torments the Christians suffered in *Dioclesian's* Persecution, some were thrown to be devoured by raging wild Beasts, Leopards, Boars, and wild Bulls, which were more merciful than the *Roman* Emperors, being struck with Reverence, would not touch the Saints Bodies: Other Christians were killed by the Sword, some by the Fire, some drowned in the Sea, others Beheaded, others Crucified, some with their Head upward, some with their Head downward, and kept alive till they were killed with Hunger; others having their Legs and Arms tied to strong Branches of

growing Trees bowed downward, were torn in pieces by the force of the Trees bending upwards: What a Variety of Torments and cruel Murtherers hath the Christian World suffered by Bloody Papists, the bloody Butcheries of the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses* testify this; in one Expedition one hundred thousand were cut off; The Duke of *Alva* boasted he had in his time put 180000 in the hand of the Hangman for Heresie. How cruel was the *Babylonian* Massacre of *Paris*, where, and in *France*, in one Month above one hundred thousand were cut off in cold Blood, *74000*. *His. Lib. 55*. The News of it were received at *Rome* with all triumphant Expressions of Joy. In the five Years Reign of *Mary Queen of England* were Martyred five Bishops, twenty one Divines, eight Gentlemen, eighty four Artificers, one hundred husbandmen, forty six Women, two Boys, two Infants, one sprung out of the Mothers Belly at the Stake, thrown into the Fire by a Serjeant. *Bairlace* in his History of the *Irish* Rebellion, proves, that in the Year 1641, there were 154000 Protestants killed, and the chief Instigators were Priests, Priars, and Jesuites; and the Priests gave the Sacrament to divers *Irish*, on condition they should spare neither *Marion*, *Winnia* nor Child of the Protestants.

A second sore Trial you may possibly suffer, is *Famine*, to be starved to Death, necessary Supports of Life being withdrawn; see how the Prophet bewails this sad Stroke, *Lamentations*, Chap. 4. v. 4. to 11. *The Tongue of the sucking Child cleaveth to the roof of his Mouth for Thirst; the young Children ask Bread, and no Man breaketh it unto them; They that did feed delicately, are desolate in the Streets; they that were brought up in Scarlet, embrace Dung-hills. They that be slain with the Sword, are better than they that be slain with Hunger, for they sleep away, stricken through for want of the Fruits of the Field. The hands of pitiful Women have sadden their own Children, they were their meat in the Destruction of the Neighbour of my People.* *Eusebius Hist. Lib. 8. Cap. 8.* tells of some in *Dioctian's* Persecution who were fixed at Stakes, till they died for Hunger. Many Christians in the *Irish* Rebellion, and in besieged Towns have been put to great Straits, yea suffered Death by mere Famine.

Thirdly, Saints may be put to suffer by *Nakedness*, being left absolutely destitute of Clothing, and exposed to extreme Necessities.

Fourthly, Saints may be exposed to many *Perils* and *Dangers*: The Apostle *Paul* enumerates many he was exercised with in his time, *2 Cor. 11. 25.* *In perils of Waters, in perils of Robbers, in perils by mine own Country-men, in perils by the Heathen, in perils in the City, in perils in the Sea, in perils among false Brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

Fifthly, Saints may lay their Account with Trials coming from *Principalities* and *Powers*, that is, from the Devil and his Instruments, *Eph. 6. 12.* of which we have already spoke.

6ly, From things present, and things to come; you may be under many Afflictions at the present time, and yet may expect heavier Crosses to come, like one Wave succeeding another, to keep you still from Security, and push you to your Duty.

7ly, and finally, You should lay your Account with Trials from height and depth; you may meet with some strong and grievous Assaults from above, as also from below, from Heaven, and from Hell; First, Some terrible Attacks from Heights, when God makes some of his Thunder-claps break on the Soul; as, First, God looks down in Anger on the Soul, and then the Christian sees all the Perfections of God engaged against himself, this makes him cry, *How great is the Power of thine Anger?* *Psalm 90. 11.* 2ly, Former Experiences lighten the Terror at this Case, they have found his Power better than Life, how can they endure his Frowns? They have felt some Drops of his Displeasure in

Hebrews XII. Verse 4.

93

In the Pangs of Conviction and Conversion, which makes them afraid of his Anger. 3^{ly}, His Absence cuts off all Comforts at the very Root, *Lam. 1: 16.* they know if he create War, none can make Peace. 4^{ly}, When God hides his Face in Duties and Ordinances, so that the Soul sees not the King in his Beauty, then the Soul is pestered with misbelieving Temptations and Objections; then Sin begins to revive, Vipers crawl from their Holes, wild Beasts from their Dens, when this Sun sets: Then Grace is under a Cloud, the Spices flow not out, the Believer doubts if he have one grain Weight of Grace. 5^{ly}, When God hides his Face, he shuts out their Prayers, *Lam. 3: 8.* Yea, he answereth them by terrible things in Righteousness; he refuseth to hear, and answereth contrary to what they seek. 2^{ly}, Lay your Account with shaking Attacks from Depths below, as First, When the Devil bears home pressingly and violently, that thou art none of the Elect of God, and so cut off for ever from the least shadow of Hope; But tho' Election be First in the Method of God's Decrees, yet we must First search if we be effectually Called, and have really closed with Christ in the offers of the Gospel. 2^{ly}, When he haunts the Soul with horrid and blasphemous Suggestions, terrible Thoughts of God, and of the Principles of Religion as cannot be with Safety named. 3^{ly}, When he raises Sin to such a vast Height, and thence infers, there is neither Power nor Will in God to pardon, and so puts the Soul on the Rack. 4^{ly}, When this Enemy Satan prevails with the Soul to lay aside it's former Grounds of Hope, and seek for new and surer Grounds, but his Design therein is to rob thee of a solid comfortable Foundation, and bring thee to build on Sand. 5^{ly}, When he makes thee believe thou can expect no Establishment, without God take an extraordinary way with thee: Whereas the Grace of God comes in calmly by the small still Voice of the Word and Spirit, and thereby works a Work of Conversion. 6^{ly}, When he per- swades the Believer, that he never had any solid Law Work, nor was ever sufficiently convinced of Sin and Misery: When in the mean time the poor Believer is like to sink under the Weight and Burden of Sin.

Enquiry fifth, What should the Christians Behaviour be under these Pressures and Tribulations? For Answer, I shall shew you some things to be done in Preparation for your Trial. 2^{ly}, Some things to be done when under it. First, If ye would be prepared for Trials and Tribulations, endeavour to be solidly established in the Faith of the grand Principles of Christianity, and reduce them into Practice in your own Case. 2^{ly}, Clear up your Interest in God through Christ, this is the great supporting Cordial in an hour of Temptation under sinking Pressures, *Rom. 8: 35, 36, 37, 38.* *Psal. 27: 1.* The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid? 3^{ly}, Keep your Soul under a Sense of your own Vileness, Filth and Unworthiness by Sin, this will render you very Submissive, for why should a living Man complain, a Man for the punishment of his Sin; this will make you resolve, I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned, *Micah 7: 9.* 4^{ly}, Deny your selves, get your Affections mortified to all external Enjoyments, this will reconcile you to the Cross, and make it easie for you to part with all, and embrace it. 5^{ly}, Furnish your selves with suitable Promises of the Covenant, and let Faith suck at these Breasts of Consolation. 6^{ly}, In prospect of Storms, frequently renew Covenant with God, and pray for Strength to endure, so did Jacob, *Jephthah, Gideon,* and others of the Cloud of Witnesses. Secondly, There are some Duties to be done when under these Tribulations. Be much in the Exercise of Prayer, when the messenger of Satan was sent to Paul, 2

he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart, 2 Cor. 12. 7, 8. We have God's Command and Promise to encourage us to this Duty, Psal. 50. 15. Psal. 91. 15. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him.

Secondly, Possess your Souls with Patience, Luke 21. 19. Heb. 10. 35. Ye have need of Patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the Promise. For this end consider, That Afflictions are God's ordinary Way with his own People, and a Comitant of his Love, Heb. 12. 6. That they are a Whetstone to sharpen and exercise Faith, 1 Pet. 1. 7. That they quicken your Longings after the Crown of Glory, to be home in your Father's Kingdom, 2 Cor. 4. 17. That these Winter Storms, Frosts and Snows will be of great Use to make the Ground of your Heart more tender. That they can never separate you from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 35. And that they shall all have an End shortly, if need be ye are to suffer a while: Tho' a thousand Tribulations be before thee, they shall at last come to one, and after that no more, but everlasting Joy shall succeed in their Room.

Thirdly, Keep the Channel of your Peace with God clear, let Conscience's Book be fair written; this will keep the Heart from sinking among the Waters of Marah, 2 Cor. 1. 12. 4ly, Live within View of the Glory to be revealed, 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. 3 Pet. 4. 13. Rejoyce in as much as ye are Partakers of Christ's Sufferings, that when his Glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding Joy. 5ly, Lodge all the Troubles ye meet with at Sins Door as the only procuring Cause, this will keep the Soul humble and patient, Lam. 3. 39. Wherefore doeth a living Man complain, a Man for the punishment of his Sins. 6ly, In all ye meet with, cheerfully own the Lord to be Holy, Just and Righteous, Lam. 3. 22. It is of the Lord's Mercies we are not consumed, because his Compassions fail not. Ezra 9. 13. Psal. 22. 2, 3. 7ly, Carry on thy Heart the lively Belief of the Omnipotency and All-sufficiency of God, Gen. 17. 1. I am the Almighty God. El-Shaddai, God Allsufficient, this may supply all Wants, and answer all Distresses.

Enquiry Sixth, How differ the Crosses of Believers from these of the wicked World? Answer first, God speedily checks Believers, Jer. 25. 29. 1 Pet. 4. 17. Judgment must begin at the House of God, but the wicked go long unpunished, their Judgment being reserved to the latter Day. 2ly, The Afflictions of Believers are but fatherly Chastisements, Lam. 3. 31, 32. Heb. 12. 6, 7. but to the Wicked pure Wrath, a Cup of red Wine without Mixture. 3ly, The Godly their Trials are Momentary, Psal. 30. 5. His anger endureth but a Moment, in his favour is Life: Weeping may endure for a Night, Joy cometh in the Morning, Isa. 54. 8. In a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee for a Moment, but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer: but the wicked's Trouble in time is only an Introduction to eternal Torments. 4ly, By his People's Trials a Design of Love is carried on, Rom. 8. 28. Isa. 54. 7. Heb. 12. 6. but the Wicked's Cup is a Cup of Fury, full of Mixture, the Dregs thereof they shall wring out and drink them, Jer. 25. 15. Psal. 75. 8. 5ly, The Presence of God is secured to Believers in all their Calamities, he acts as a tender Father pitying his Children, Psal. 103. 13. as a skilled Physician administering a necessary Cure, Isa. 27. 9. Exod. 15. 26. as a faithful Friend, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will make a way to escape, 1 Cor. 10. 13. and as a wise Pilot, he steers their Ship through great Storms and rouling Waves, Mat. 8. 24, 26. but to the Wicked the Lord acts as an angry Judge, punishing an incorrigible Malefactor, declaring the Severity of his vindictive Justice.

Hebrews XII. Verse 4.

95

All that hath been said in clearing and confirming this *Doctrine* hath been so Practical, that I need not enlarge on the Application, only take

Use first of Lamentation over, and Reproof of a Generation that live like the People of *Laish*, secure and at Ease; as, *First*, Some that pretend no Religion, and therefore fear no Trial on that Head, they *Gallio-like*, care for none of these things. *2ly*, Others put on a Name of a Profession, but they are at a point never to resist to the Blood in it's Defence. *3ly*, Some pretend and resolve they will hold fast, yet it is but off-hand Work without due Deliberation, they sit *as down to count the cost*, and when it comes to the push, they cry the *Cost* is heavier than they can bear, *This Evil is of the Lord*; (*say they*) *why wait we for the Lord any longer?* *4ly*, Others, tho' under a Profession, yet live Strangers to the Life and Power of Godliness, all the Secrets of Religion are yet absolute Mysteries to them; so they have nothing to support them, and therefore sink, and relinquish the Lord and his Cause in a Day of Trial.

To reach a Conviction to such Persons, consider, *First*, How fearful is it to suppose there should be such Monsters of Atheists on Earth, as to have no Impression of Religion; *2ly*, It is not the having of Religion brings on Trials, but the want of it, all Trouble being bred in the Womb of Sin, this puts the Crown from our Head, and turns our *Dancing into Mourning*, *no unto us, for we have sinned*. *3ly*, The Day is coming when Tribulation and Trials shall attack thee, as an armed Man, and thou shalt be without all shelter, when this *Day of Visitation comes*, where will thou leave thy Glory, where will thou rest at Night? *4ly*, It argues no small Folly in thee, that thou art short of that common Degree of Deliberation, which thou wilt be sure not to fail in, concerning external Trifles: The best Undertaking in things outward, ye usually cast up it's Conveniencies and Inconveniencies, and consider which preponderates, and accordingly chuse, or refuse. *5ly*, Ye to whom Religion is merely a bodily Exercise, this profits not, to be employed only in external Duties, but never to enter to the Chamber of Presence, ye make it a Penance to your selves, and live Strangers to the Divine Pleasures, Joy and Comfort Believers find in it, whom blame ye for this? God by the Gospel calls you to come beyond the outer Court, to come to his Seat, and there to have a sight of the King in his Beauty.

Use second, Forecast and lay your Account with all kind of Trials, *First*, God will try you, as he tryed *Abraham*, *Gen. 22. 1. 2.* he will make Proof of the Truth of your Grace, the Ingenuity of your Profession, the Steadfastness and Stability of your Resolution, for God, by picking up and threatening to rob you of the chiefest earthly Satisfaction, so he tried *Abraham* and *Jak*: By delaying his Appearance for you under Storms to the fourth Watch of the Night, leaving you to tug and toil alone. God will do this to rub up a praying Edge on his People, *Mark. 7. 7. Luke 18. 7.* to Exercise your Faith and Patience, *Rom. 5. 3.* to repell your carnal Wisdom, *Mark. 16. 24. Luke 9. 25.* to ripen you for an Outgate and Deliverance, *the Lord says that he may be gracious*, and to encrease your Hatred and Loathing of Sin, *Psal. 5. 5.*

Secondly, Lay Account with Trials from *Satan*, by which he designs your Seduction and Destruction, as, *First*, By dropping in surprising Suggestions to Sin, *Mark. 6. 22. 23.* *2ly*, By presenting sinful Objects with a captivating Pleasure, either to the Eye of the Body, or of the Mind, *2 Sam. 11. 2. 1 John 2. 16.* And, *3ly*, By exciting corrupt and vicious Affections, as in *David* after *Bathsheba*. *4ly*, By large, tho' groundless Promises to make his Bait take, as to *Christ* himself, he offered the Kingdoms of the World, *Mark. 4. 8.*

That

That ye may be Victorious over these, *be in the vigorous Exercise of Faith*, Eph. 6. 16. *Be close and serious in Prayer*, 2 Cor. 12. 7. Matth. 26. 41. *Be constant in watching over your selves*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. *Be frequent in meditating on the Word of God*, Eph. 6. 17. *By this Christ beat off Satan*, *Maub. Chap. 4.* *Live within view of the Crown of Glory*, Rev. 2. 10. Chap. 4. 4. Chap. 7. 9.

To bear you up under Satan's fierce Assaults, *First*, Oppose the Power of God against him, who can easily bind Satan, Luke 11. 22. *can tread him under your feet*, Rom. 16. 20. and can do abundantly above what we can ask or think, Eph. 3. 20. *2ly*, Encourage your selves by Christ's Intercession, who prays that his People's Faith may not fail, Luke 22. 32. *3ly*, Mind that Christ the Captain of your Salvation is engaged for you, and will land you safe in Glory, 2 Tim. 1. 12. *I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that Day.*

Thirdly, Forecast Trials from the World, from the things of the World, Pleasures, Honours and Riches: From the Men of the World be on your guard, *First*, Against alluring blandishing Promises, to renounce Christ; mind that the Friendship of the World is enmity to God, James 4. 4. *2ly*, Guard against their Threatnings, Prov. 29. 25. *The fear of Man brings a Snare, but whose trusts in the Lord shall be safe*, Isa. 41. 7. *Fear ye not the reproof of Men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.* *3ly*, Take heed of the Intreaties of Parents, Friends and Relations, Deut. 13. 6, 8. *If thy Brother, the Son of thy Mother, or thy Son, or thy Daughter, or the Wife of thy Bosom, or thy Friend which is as thine own Soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods—Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him.* Deut. 33. 9. Matth. 10. 37. Chap. 16. 22. Acts 21. 13. *4ly*, If they turn their Back on you, and mock and reproach, value it not, Psal. 27. 10. *When Father and Mother for sake me, the Lord will take me up.*

For Direction, Amidst all these Dangers, *First*, Be undaunted in your Profession of, and in Adherence to Christ and his Cause, Phil. 1. 28. *In nothing terrified by your Adversaries.* See how Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego acted in such a difficult juncture, Dan. 3. 16, 17. *They said to the King, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter—Our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King.* With what Courage acted the Proto-Martyr Stephen, Acts 6. 15. *so as all that sat in the Council saw his face as it had been the face of an Angel.* *2ly*, Firmly expect God's gracious Presence, for he hath promised, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. *That he will be with thee in Trouble*, Psal. 91. 14. *That when they deliver you to Kings and Governours, it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

Thirdly, Think much on your Divine Reward, for your Death shall be of high Price with God, Psal. 79. 10. *The Lord revengeth the blood of his Servants.* Psal. 116. 15. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints,* God is thereby highly honoured, 1 Pet. 4. 16. *If any Man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorifie God on this behalf.* The Interest of the Gospel is confirmed and advanced, Phil. 1. 12. *I would ye should understand, Brethren, that the things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.* 2 Tim. 2. 10. *I endure all things for the Elects sake; And by your Sufferings you secure eternal Life to your selves*, Mark. 10. 39. *He that loseth his Life for my sake, shall find it*, Heb. 11. 35. *That they may obtain a better Resurrection:*

Fourthly, Consider, that if God bring you to a bloody Death for his Cause, ye shall get rich Cordials to support you under it, for your Souls are ensured, Matth. 10. 39. *Rev.*

Rev. 6. 9. Your Bodies shall be gloriously raised, Heb. 11. 35. and the Crown shall immediately succeed to the Cross, John 12. 26. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Revel. 2. 10. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Fifthly, Consider the dreadful Punishment of Apostates: Sometimes God punisheth them in this Life, John 12. 25. *He that loveth his life shall lose it.* 1 Sam. 2. 30. *They that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.* Jer. 29. 21. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kelaiah, and Zeackiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesie a lie unto you in my name, Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes.* Judas who betrayed our Saviour for a small piece of Money, his guilty Conscience became his Tormenter, and he went and hanged himself, Mat. 27. 5. *He burst asunder in the midst, and his bowels gushed out.* Acts 1. 18. Julian the Emperor, surnamed the Apostate, for a while professed the Christian Religion, and taught it to others: But having obtained the Empire, he prosecuted the Christians with all Fury, and designed to have ruined them: but God put a Stop, for in his War with the Persians, he was wounded so deep in the side by an Arrow, that he died, throwing a handful of his own Blood into the Air, saying, *Thou hast overcome, O Galilean, Socrates his Ecclesiast.* Lib. 3. Cap. 20. Theodoret. Lib. 3. Cap. 25. Lucian an Apostate, who barked like a foul-mouthed Dog, bitter Reproaches against the Christians, was himself in God's Vengeance torn in Pieces and devoured of Dogs. Francis Spira an Italian embraced the Protestant Religion, and maintained it a while with great Zeal, but afterward from Fear and Carnal Policy, acknowledged to the Pope's Ambassador at Venice, That he was in an Error, and promised for the future, to be subject to the Pope's Laws, and make a publick Recantation in his own Country: But soon after this he became sick in Soul and Body, and despaired of God's Mercy, because of his Apostacy; He refused to be Comforted, and died in Despair and horrible Torment of Conscience, Sleidan. Lib. 21. But if Apostates should escape Punishment in this Life, they shall be sure of it in the Life to come, 2 Tim. 2. 12. *If we deny him, he will also deny us.* Matth. 10. 33. *Whoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my father which is in heaven.* Luke 9. 26. *Whoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.* I proceed to

Obleve 4th. *That any thing that comes short of Bloody Sufferings which Believers meet with, should be accounted a Fruit of Divine Tenderness and Compassion.*

I shall not insist on this Note: Only First, Since it is so, let us in this Day be thankful to God for such great Tenderness, *That a man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of his labour, is the gift of God,* Eccel. 3. 13. 2ly, Beware of Reproaching, and of adding Affliction to the afflicted, who are cast from Vessel to Vessel. 3ly, Sympathise with them, do not forget the Afflictions of Joseph, but assist them by your Prayers at the Throne of Grace, Rom. 5. 15. *Weep with them that weep.* 4ly, Think on a Change of your Lot, and prepare for these sore Sufferings. I proceed to

Observe 5th. *That it is highly dishonourable to God, and injurious to our selves, to faint in the Cause of Christ and the Gospel, under lesser Trials, when we are advertised there are greater to be undergone on the same Account.*

I shall First, Give some Reasons of this Doctrine. 2ly, Shew how come many to faint under lesser Trials. And 3ly, Improve the whole.

First, Fainting under lesser Trials is dishonourable to God, for it reflects on all his noble Attributes, which stand engaged in Favour of his serious People, who have fled to him for Refuge. 2ly, It calls in Question all the Promises of the well ordered Cove-

quest, which are so full and free, that whoever lays hold on them, can find nothing amissing, can want nothing that is good for them. 2^{ly}, It greatly scandaliseth others of the Godly, to see some sink and despond, as if the Consolations of God were small; Yea, it brings them to call in Question the Truth of Religion, seeing there appears nothing in them that profess it, to support them when there is but a shaking of the Spear. 3^{ly}, It stumbles, yea hardens the Wicked in their evil Courses, emboldning them to say, Where is the Truth of Religion? it is but sham. 4^{ly}, It is an Evidence, that these who so faint, have not been sound in their Covenanting with Christ, they have not considered the Terms on which they concluded with him.

Secondly, Fainting under lesser Trials is injurious to our selves; for thereby we provoke the Lord to cover his Face in a Cloud, and intercept Access to him. 2^{ly}, We bind up our own Mouths from sucking Comfort from the Promises, these sweet Breasts of Consolation. 3^{ly}, Ye give Satan the great Adversary of your Salvation Occasion to triumph against you, for he will improve it. 4^{ly}, It will make that ye cannot hold up your Face to God in Duties, be your Distress never so great, for how dare ye when the Beginnings of Trouble fright you from him?

Secondly, I proposed to enquire how many come to faint under lesser Trials? Answer, First, Because they are not under a present lively Impression and Persuasion of the great Truths in Religion. 2^{ly}, They resist and quench the Motions of the Spirit of God; Were they more tender in this, they would be more Resolute in a Day of Trial. 3^{ly}, Because they consult with Flesh and Blood, and thereby are cunningly betrayed. 4^{ly}, Grace is not in present lively Exercise, Faith is not acting, did they endure a feeling of him who is invisible, Heb. 11. 27. they would stand out the Trial: Love is not burning toward Christ, else it would constrain them to their Duty, being stronger than Death: Impatience dispossesteth the Man of himself, and makes him Slave to every minute Trial: Hope is not in Exercise, for this would feed Joy, and exultate the Soul: Hope makes not ashamed, but rejoiceth in Tribulations. 5^{ly}, Experiences are laid by as useless VVares, the Soul casts not up the Records of former Enjoyments, calls not to mind his sweet Berbers and Ebenezers, when he could say, *Altho' he hath God helped*. 6^{ly}, From a Heart wedded to the VVorld and its sensual Satisfactions, 2 Tim. 4. 10. *Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world*. 7^{ly}, From the slavish fear of Man, their Spirits are daunted and discouraged, every Bug-bear appears of a Mournainous Hight, but why art thou afraid of a Man that shall die?

Use First, This Doctrine may inform us, First, How little Ground we have to expect Good from our own Hands, if we abstract from God, the least Shadow will fright us to Fainting. 2^{ly}, See how great need we have for a clois Dependence on God for Strength and Support in Difficulties.

Use Second, Of Reproof to such as at first Appearance of Trials are frightened to Despondency: Consider First, Ye have the Seed of all Trouble in you by Sin, do not then blame God for it, *Why should a living man complain?* 2^{ly}, Since you deserve so much, any Punishment except Hell should be welcome from God's Hand, as Torture or Bloody Death. 3^{ly}, That God's Interests are in the same Bottom with you, Isa. 63. 9. *In all your afflictions he is afflicted*, Chap. 43. 1, 2, 3. 4^{ly}, That Trials are so far from being prejudicial, that they are much for your Advantage, they are a fining Pot to boil off your Dross, Psal. 119. 71. Isa. 27. 9. They add to your Crown, and make it more weighty: Every Degree shall be a new Super-added Gemm to thy Diadem and Crown in Glory, *These who walk in white, are these who come out of many tribulations*, Rev. 7. 13, 14.

Use Third,

Hebrews XII. Verse 5.

99

Use Third, Of Exhortation. Believers, put on holy Magnanimity and Courage for God in all Trials: For this End, 1. Use the Shield of Faith, which will hold off Satan and all his Instruments. 2. Arm thy self with the Promises: Hath God sent thee these Messengers of Peace, and will thou not use them as Cordials, to keep thee from fainting? 3. Look from the Top of the Mount to the Land of Glory, and see what is provided for thee in endless Eternity: Can any thing you hazard in the World Counter-balance the Loss of this? May not the Thoughts of it make thee sing in the Furnace?

H E B R E W S XII. Verse 5.

And ye have forgotten the Exhortation that speaketh unto you as unto Children, My Son, despise not thou the Chastening of the LORD, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him.

THE Apostle in this Text proceeds to a new Argument, whereby he presses the Exhortation to Patience and Perseverance under Sufferings, and it is taken from the Nature and Design of all these Sufferings; On God's Part, they are not only Testimonies to the Truth, but they are Chastisements which we stand in need of, wherein God hath a blessed Design for our Good:

In the Words consider, *First*, Their Connexion with the preceeding, in the copulative Particle [*And*] which is for rendring a Reason of what went before, having given them a tacite Rebuke in the preceeding *Verse*, for being ready to faint in lesser Trials; Here he shews whence it was so with them, they let slip the Exhortations provided for their Encouragement in the Promises and Directions of God's Covenant.

Secondly, The Apostle introduces his Argument, by referring to a Divine Testimony of Scripture, wherein it is contained, *Prov. 3. 11.* And it is proponed by way of Exhortation, to shew it was no other ways with them than with others of the People of God in former Ages, and that God had long before laid up Provision for their Encouragement.

Thirdly, He charges them for Want of a due Consideration of that Exhortation, *Ye have forgotten*: What we mind not as we ought, we may justly be said to have forgotten.

Fourthly, Consider the manner of the Exhortation, he speaks unto you as unto Children; Wherein, *First*, The Scripture is said to speak: It is not a dumb and silent Letter, it hath a Voice in it, the Voice of God himself, *John 7. 42. Chap. 19. 37. Rom. 4. 3.* If we hear not the Voice of God in it, it is because of an evil Heart of Unbelief, *Heb. 3. 7, 13, 15.* 2^{ly}, The Word spoke long before by *Solomon* to that Generation, is said to be spoke to these *Hebrews*, for the Spirit of God is always present with the Word, and speaks it alike to all Ages. 3^{ly}, The word *Speaketh* is *διαλεγεται*, it argues, pleads, and keeps Conference with us, it presses the Will and Mind of God on us in all Ages, and the Lord's People know the Force of its Reasoning. 4^{ly}, The infinit Condescension

of God that speaketh to us as unto Children, proven by the Application of the Text, *My son*; The words are spoke by *Solomon* Originally, not as a natural Father, but as a Prophet and Teacher of the Church, representing the Love of God as a Father to his People under their Affliction.

Fifthly, In the Text consider the *Exhortation* it self, consisting of two Parts; *First*, *Despise not the chastising*, the word *vaivada* here rendered *Correction*, comes from a Verb that signifies sometimes *To Teach* or *Instruct*, Acts 22. 3. 1 Tim. 1. 20. Sometimes *To Correct* or *Chastise*, Rev. 2. 19. it is such Correction as is given by Parents or Masters in Liberal Education of Children. Therefore we are warned; *First*, *Despise is not*, and this imports, 1. Want of due Regard to Divine Institution under our Afflictions and Sufferings, and this ariseth either 1. From Inadvertency we look upon them as common Accidents, wherein God hath no special Design. Or 2. From Stout-heartedness, we resolve to abide the Trial, by the Strength of our own Resolutions, without any Respect to the Grace of God. 2^{ly}, It imports Want of the Wisdom of Faith, to discern what of God is in the Affliction: Men do not see God's Love to their Persons, his Displeasure at their Sin, nor the End he aims at, our Instruction and Sanctification. 3^{ly}, Want of a due Application of our Soul to God's Call and Mind, by submitting to his Pleasure, by reforming Things wherein he is displeased, and by the Exercise of Faith for our Support: Where these are wanting, it is a despising the Chastising of the Lord.

A second Warning is, *Nor faint when thou art rebuked of him*. This is another Evil we are subject to under Afflictions, and must guard against. The word rendered *Rebuked*, signifies a Reproof by rational Conviction, which accompanies Chastisements, when God discovers to us the Evil of our Hearts and Ways, which make Afflictions necessary. Fainting under the Cross, consists, *First*, In Despondency or Heartless casting down of the Mind, which David reasons against, Psal. 42. 5. *Why art thou cast down O my soul? why art thou disquieted in me?* 2^{ly}, In Heartless Complaints to the Discouragement of others, Lam. 1. 12. *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see, is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?* Heb. 12. 12, 13. 3^{ly}, In omitting or giving over necessary Duty, Heb. 10. 25, 26. 4^{ly}, In judging wrong of God's Dealings, either that our Chastisements are too great, or too long, or misconstruing God's Design in them, Isa. 40. 27, 28. *Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is he weary?*

The Scope of the preceeding, and some of the subsequent Verses being much the same, I shall only speak to the following Notes from this Text.

Observe first, *That God is most Observant what Men and Women do with his Exhortations, what Entertainment they give them.*

Observe second, *That the Entertainment most part of Hearers give, is to forget, neglect, and slight his Exhortations.*

Observe third, *That God takes it very ill off Peoples Hand to do so, and will Resent it.*

Observe fourth, *That God's Exhortations are his speaking Messengers to the Souls of People.*

I return to Observe First, *That God strictly observes what Men and Women do with his Exhortations, what Entertainment they give them.*

To

To prepare this for our Use, I shall Enquire, *First*, How God observes? *2^d*, Why he so narrowly observes how People entertain his Exhortations?

Enquiry First, How God observes what Men do with his Exhortations? *Answer* First, He observes immediately by himself. His eyes see, his eyes lids try the children of men; the Greatness of his Omniscience is described, *Psalm*. 139. 2^d. He observes by his Spies; As, 1. Angels. These are as Protectors to defend, and as Censurers to observe Peoples Entertainment of God's Exhortations, they wait in particular on our Assemblies, and report our Behaviour there. 2. By his Messengers who are Gods Mouth to People, and are to return an Answer to God, if their Message be taken off their Hand. 3. By his Judgments, they are poured out on Contemners of his Warnings: The Lord says, *Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm*, *Psalm*. 105. 15. Saul despiseth this; *Judas* and others for contemning God's Exhortations.

Enquiry Second, Why doth the Lord so narrowly notice how Men entertain his Exhortations? *Answer First*, Because his Glory is eminently concerned; As 1. His Omnipiscency: Shall he connive at Sin when he sees it? Nay, *He is of purer eyes*, *Hab*. 1. 13. 2. The Glory of his Authority and Power, with which the Calls of the Gospel are clothed. 3. His Faithfulness is concerned to accomplish his Threatnings. 4. His glorious Wisdom, Love, and Mercy, is seen in contriving this glorious Gospel, and making known his Will in his Word as our Rule; And, Can he then but notice them that despise it? *Secondly*, The Design of all God's Exhortations are Mens Good; This is their Scope and Level, and God's Desire to reach this, makes him concerned to notice how People improve his Exhortations. *Thirdly*, He hath warned his People that he will be so accurate an Observer, *The king came in to see the guests*, *Matth*. 22. 11. *Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them*. *Fourthly*, This may be most engaging to his People, to take themselves to task on this Head; God is noticing and looking on, therefore I must not be Remiss. *Fifthly*, It reflects a Contempt on the whole of his glorious Design by the *Obscuring* of the Gospel, when what he hath enjoyed is neglected. *Sixthly*, When the Gospel is contemned, God is clearly vindicated of Sinners Blood; and it is fairly laid at their own Door, *Thou hast destroyed thy self*, *Hol*. 13. 9. *I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing*, *Hol*. 8. 12.

Use First, Hence be Informed, how full the World is of practical Atheism, the wicked Men of the World do not believe that God strictly observes how they improve his Exhortations; But they shall find it to be true, *When God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to this Gospel*, *Rom*. 2. 16. And, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, than for thee, *Matth*. 11. 24.

Use Second, Of Reproof and Conviction. To such who regard not God's Exhortations; Consider, That you set your selves as an opposite Party against the great God. That you act the part of the greatest Enemies to your own Souls. That you flee in the Face of the brightest Light presented to you in this Gospel. And you have 2 Witnesses within your own Breasts as well as above, to prove that you Counter-act the Authority of the great God, as well as the Interest of your own Souls.

Observe Second, That the Entertainment most part of Hearers give to God's Exhortations, is to forget, neglect, and slight them.

Method requires, I should *First*, Prove the Truth of this Doctrine. *2^d*, Shew where in neglecting and slighting God's Exhortations consists? *3^d*, How come many Hearers to forget and slight them? *4th*, Apply the Whole.

And 7thly, The Truth of this Doctrine appears: 1st From the general Propensity, daring and open Impiety that is now shew'd to wear it self in Face of the Sun, where are Gods Exhortations with such a wicked Crew. 2^{dy} From the Formality and Hypocrisy of this Professing Age, they perform Lip-service, but are absolute Strangers to the Heart-exercising Work of Religion. 3^{dy} Most part of Hearers do not practise Gods Exhortations; This proves they have no Room for them, either in their Heart or Life. 4^{dy} From the general Upsitting and Decay even among the People of God: Where is the wonted Wrestling alone and together? That Communion with God, and Tenderness in Life and Practice? That Vigour in Morification? That Strength of Love and holy Bread of God? That Jealousie over our selves that used to be among the Lords People in former times? 5^{dy} From abounding Ignorance of God, which would not be, were his Law and Exhortations writ on our Heart; then we should all know the Lord. 6^{ly} Our sinking under lesser Trials, makes it evident we do not hearken to Gods Exhortations; This *Fainting* the Text and Context complains of, and it is a very common Evil in our Days.

Secondly, The forgetting and slighting Gods Exhortations, consists *First*, In Peoples hearing carelessly, without Application to their own Souls Cases. 2^{dy} In waiting Faith to credit the Authority of God stamp on them. 3^{dy} Letting them slip from their Memory, that they are no more minded. 4^{dy} In taking no time for ruminating and revolving on them, as being of their greatest Concern.

Thirdly, I proposed to shew how it comes that many forget Gods Exhortations: And *First*, No wonder Strangers to God forget them; For 1. They understand them not, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* 2. Strangers to God are acted by opposite Principles, which makes them break these Bands, and cast these Cords from them, and resist all Divine Exhortations. 3. These strike at their Idols, and they will act as an opposite Party to God and his Counsel, sooner than part with beloved Lusts, Hos. 4. 17. 4. Their Heads and Hearts are so full of other things, that they have no Room for Christ.

2^{dy} The Lords People may forget these Exhortations, 1. Because they intermit Correspondence with their own Hearts, and so they see not their Wounds, and care not for a Plaster. 2. Their Eye of Faith is sometimes dazled, and when the Word is not mixt with Faith, Heb. 4. 2. it will never abide, but slip both Memory and Judgment. 3. Their Hearts are so crouded with other things, that there is no Room for these Exhortations. 4. Concern about Religion is under a Cloud, and not in lively Exercise in their Souls. 5. There are many Heart-divisions and Distractions, in time of reading and hearing Gods Exhortations, that carry away their Minds. 6. Gods Authority stamp on his Word is out of their View, they little think how they may see his Glory passing before them; Otherways it would take deeper Impression on their Spirit. 7. After they have heard, they do not water the Exhortations with serious Prayer, and Tears of Godly Repentance. 8. From prevailing Power of Idols.

Use first, Hence be informed what is the Cause of the general Barrenness and Non-proficiency under the Gospel; Gods Word which conveys spiritual Sap and Influences, is neglected, slighted, and forgot.

Use second, Of Conviction to such as so slight and forget the Word; Consider 1. This is Madness and Folly, Jer. 8. 9. *They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?* 2. That thus habitually to slight it, is an Evidence thou art void of the Fear

of God, if it be not thy Burden that causes thee off to mourn. 3. The Contempt and Slight is reflected immediately on God himself, and see how thou standest, when he is thy Counter-party.

Use third, Of Exhortation, return and practise God's Exhortations, hide his Word in your Heart; Consider First, How great Advantage will accrue to thee by so doing, 1. It will introduce thee to more clear and distinct Acquaintance with God, Antidote against Sin and Temptations, Psa. 119. 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. 2. It will be a present rich Fond for Support under Trials, it being the lower Store-house of Heaven, Psa. 119. 50. This is my comfort in mine affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. 3. It will prevent thy mistaking God in his Way when Trials are growing, and will open thine Eyes to see a Wheel in the midst of tations, and what Judgments it will provoke God to bring upon thee, of which you may hear in the next Doctrine.

Use fourth, Of Direction, If ye would prevent forgetting God's Exhortations, and have a sanctified Memory; Then First, Let the Business of Salvation, the Condition of your Soul get Room with due Care, Fear, and Solicitude; this will make Way for these Exhortations, 2d, Hear and Read for Eternity, as having an Impression, that by this word ye shall be judged, Rom. 2. 16. 3d, Entertain the Word with Love and Warmness, give it full Room in the Heart, beware of detaching it prisoner in unwelcome places, 4d, What makes for thee, slip it down to thy Heart in the time, and fix it close as a Plaster on the Sore. 5d, Send it up to Heaven by Ejaculatory Prayer, put it in God's keeping, that he may hand it out to thee in thy greatest Straits.

Observe Third, That God takes it very ill, if a People's Hand, and will Revert it when they forget and slight his Exhortations, 2 Chron. 36. 12-18. I shall here consider why God takes it so ill. 2d, What way he Reverts it.

First, God is highly offended with those who forget his Exhortations; 1. Because his own Glory and Honour is eminently concerned, and to have that blotted or reflected upon, consists not with his Grandeur; Your forgetting says what he hath exhorted to is not worth Crediting, nor laying Stress upon. 2. It tends to subvert and make null, so far as the Creature can, God's Authority as the Sovereign Legislator; So it strikes the glorious Design of the preached Gospel at the very Root; If this be forgot & slighted, then in vain Christ undertook to satisfy Justice by his Incarnation, Death, and Sufferings, in vain is he risen and ascended, and now Interceeds; now when this rich and noble Display of free Grace is so baffled and affronted, can God pass it without Resentment in the greatest Severity? 3d, The heaviest Threats stand in the Word of God against such as are guilty in this matter, and his Faithfulness is obliged to see them execute to the full, Deut. 32. 11. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day. verse 14. And thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God (What is the Certification?) verses 19, 20. I will resist against you this day, that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyed before your face, so shall ye perish. Job 8. 11. Can the reeds grow without water? can the flag grow without water? verse 13. So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrites hope shall perish. Isa. 65. 11. But ye are they that forsake the Lord your God, and get my holy mountain. (that is the Messages of God delivered in the Temple standing on Mount

these things? That after all he rose as the publick Head and Representative of the Elect, Rom. 8. 34. and is now ascended to take Possession in their Name, John 14. 2. What Ground of Hope is here, look through the Eye of Faith at Christ passing to Glory, trailing Sin, Hell, Death, and Devils in Triumph at his Chariot Wheels. 3. Concerning God the Gospel speaks his mysterious and unparalleled Love, John 3. 16. God so loved the World, that he gave his own Son; It speaks his eternal Purpose to save Sinners in this way, Ephes. 1. 4. 5. His sovereign and free Grace in this matchless Remedy, saving some and not others, sending the Gospel to some and not to others; His Justice in punishing Sin, even in his own Son substitute in our Room, and his Mercy in Pardoning Sinners on Christ's Satisfaction.

Thirdly, God's Exhortations speak to us the great Precepts both of Law and Gospel, that we may love him fully, serve him only and for ever; and the great comprehensive Gospel-Command, 1 John 3. 23. To believe on the Name of Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, They speak the fearful and terrible Threatnings of God's Word, summed up in Gal. 3. 10. — Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. How fearful shall the Execution of this be, when our Lord comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thess. 1. 8.

Fifthly, The sweet Promises of the New Covenant, the Conveyances of all spiritual Comfort, they are a tongue to speak a word in season to Believers in all their Doubts and Fears.

Secondly, I proposed to shew in what Respects God's Exhortations may be said to speak to us. And 1. God having delivered his Mind in them concerning our Salvation, and the Means leading unto it, he hath substitute them in his Room, as our Instructors: 2. God hath set them forth clothed with his Authority, to the End they may speak to us, and that he himself may speak in and by them: Hence they are oft Prefaced with, Thus saith the Lord of hosts. 3. The Spirit of God speaks by them to his People, by clothing them with Life, Light, and Power, in their Errands to Souls. I come to Enquire

Thirdly, How doth these Exhortations speak? Answer 1. Plainly, All that is necessary to Salvation is laid open to the meanest Capacity, Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path, Psal. 119. 105. 2. With Authority, not like the words of Scribes and Pharisees, but in the Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power, 1 Cor. 2. 4. 3. Effectually, it shall gain the Errand for which God sends it, and not return empty, Isa. 55. 11. 4. Fully, all that is necessary for the Knowledge of God, Discovery of Duty, curbing of Sin, promoting of Holiness, and comforting Believers, is here to be found; no need of unwritten Traditions of Men to help it. 5. Seasonably, the Word of God comes in at the very Nick of Extremity, When I said my foot slipped, thy mercy O Lord held me up, Psal. 94. 18. 6. The Word speaks Warmly and Affectionately, sweetly moving the Will to Compliance, and engaging the Affections, so as the Soul cries out, Never man spoke as this.

Fourthly, To whom doth the Word of Exhortation speak? Answer, It speaks to all, but with Difference, according to their diverse States, Cases, and Conditions, Psal. 138. 1. The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the Sun unto the going down thereof. The Lord speaks to all the Inhabitants of the Earth, and more particularly to the Hearers of the Gospel, whether they be Strangers to God or his

his own Children, and should be carefully applyed to each sort. And therefore, I come to

Use first, Hence be informed, 1. Of the valuable Worth of the Word of God; Its Author is the great God, it is calculate by him to his Peoples Cases, the subject Matter of it is *the great Mystery of Godliness*, the Method is *Plain, Easy, and Powerful*. 2. Hence Learn, That till God be in Earnest with Sinners, and every Word come with a Tongue and a Voice, bemoaning their Case, and Exhorting them to Amendment, they will not hear, *Math. 23. 37. Jer. 13. 17.*

Use second, Of Reproof to them to whom the Word speaks, but they will not Hear nor Answer; It is as a lovely Song to them, *They hear God's words but do them not, Ezek. 33. 31, 32.* Yea, some jest and mock at the Word, which should make them tremble, *Isa. 66. 2.* Julian the Apostate mocked at Christ and his Word, but at his Death was made with Terror to cry out, *Thou hast overcome at length, O Jesus of Galilee!*

Use third, Of Exhortation, Let every sort of Persons take heed, and carefully apply and make use of God's Word, *Exod. 3. 5. Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.* Let this strike us with awful Reverence to the great God. I shall apply the Word, 1. To these who are Strangers to the Grace of God. 2. Unto Children who are in Covenant with God, the Word hath a different Language to you; and therefore there is much need of spiritual Wisdom and Tenderness, in the Application of it.

First, To you who are Strangers to the Grace of God, there are some of you, 1. Lying dead in Sin, Senseless and Fearless: This Word of Exhortation speaks a few things to you, as, 1. Ye have a comfortless Life of it, when compared with the Life of God's People, one Hour of theirs is preferable to a *Methuselah's* Life of yours; Ye never got a fatted Calf to make merry, ye but feed with Swine upon Husks, *Luke Chap. 15.* 2. Your present Case is lamentable, full of Danger, it renders you fit Fuel for the Wrath of God to feed upon, *Eph. 5. 6. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience;* And there is nothing betwixt you and it but the small Thread of uncertain Life. 3. Tho' now you swagger it out under Advantage of common Comforts, yet how will ye behave when pale Death looks you in the Face? 4. What a meeting shall thou have with Christ at the great Day, whom now thou crucifies afresh? How terrible will the Display of his Appearance be, *When he comes to take vengeance in flaming fire on all them that obey not the gospel, 2 Thess. 1. 8.* Therefore 5. Now the word of Exhortation calls, that while it is to day, you hear his voice, turn from your Sins by Repentance, embrace the Offers of his Grace in the Gospel, *Isa. 55. 1, 2-7.* If you do it not, lay Account you shall be eternally Consumed.

Secondly, Others are utterly benumbed and stupid as to their Souls, but have a fervid Edge for the World, Interests, in their Care for Back and Belly. The Exhortation speaks to you, 1. You have given the World an absolute Preference to God, and the Body to your Souls; O what unaccountable Folly! 2. It argues Height of Atheism, and brutish Ignorance in Matters of eternal Concern, worse than the Brutes, *For the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his masters crib, but Israel do not know, my people do not consider, Isa. 1. 3.* 3. Ye have no great Reason to be so set on the World with its Profits and Pleasures, for to you they are all wasted with the curse of God, you Usurpers have no Right from God, to the least even of common Enjoyments. 4. Tho' by your Care and Industry ye purchase Crowns and Kingdoms, yet what Profit when cast up at last; that ye lose your own souls? *Matth. 16. 28.*

Thirdly, Others are openly profane, whose Lives are pieced up with the grossest of

Impieties, the Exhortation speaks sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of Juniper to you, Psal. 120. 1. Is the very Sense of a Deity so far worn off, that ye pride your selves in that abominable thing that God hates? Were there no more but the Light of Nature, how dare ye look in its Face, and do such things? 2. Much more, how dare ye state your selves directly opposite to the known Will of God, are ye ready to Counter-argue the Case with him? 3. Dare ye say that ever ye give Reason it self Room to argue with you, abstracting from all Religion, do ye consider what prejudice comes not only to your Soul, but also to your Body, Health and Estate, by your wicked Lives? 4. If ye grant a future Estate, the Being of a God, and the Immortality of the Soul; Looks this like the Way to future Happiness?

Fourthly, Others are formal and hypocritical Professors, who please your selves with bare Forms of Duty, flowing from Custom, Education, and Example; but are unacquaint with real practical Godliness: The word of Exhortation speaks to you, First, It speaks out your Names who ye are, 1. Ye have ordinarily a whole and unbroken Condition without Fears, Exercises or Doubts, and care not for conversing on these Subjects. 2. Much of your Discourse about Religion, is to your own Commendation, like the Pharisee, Luke 18. 11. 3. Ye are full of Pride, Self-esteem, and vain Confidence, and are ready to condemn others when they fall, and vindicate your own Sincerity. 4. Tho' ye profess to be Enemies to Prophanity, yet you have a secret Hatred at a strict tender Walk and Conversation, ye wonder why any Person should be troubled with Doubts and Fears, and are ready to reproach this as Fancie, Conceit, and Melancholly. 5. Ye have base Ends in Duties, like the Pharisees, to be seen of men, Matth. 6. 2: Are more for publick Duties than private, a Saint in Company, but an Atheist alone; could your Closets speak, they would tell, *It is a shame even to speak of these things which are done of them in secret*, Ephes. 5. 12. 6. Your Carriage under Afflictions discovers your Hypocrisie, ye are not afraid of spiritual Judgments, as of the hiding of God's Face, the Plagues of Heart, and prevailing of a Body of Death, your Recourse is not first to God, if ye can get another Shift, ye like Saul will go to the Witch of Endor; Or, if ye go to God, it is rather for Relief from the Trouble, than for Grace to Repent of the Sin that procured it.

Secondly, The Word speaks your Danger, how great it is; For 1. Ye can have no Communion with God, Job 13. 16. *An hypocrite shall not come before him*. 2. Ye are guilty of the highest Lese-Majesty, Counterfitters of the King's Coin, ye set up for a Religion God hath not appointed in his Word; Ye lie to the holy Ghost, Acts 5. 3. 3. Ye blasphemously deny God's All-seeing Eye, Job 22. 13. *Thou sayest, How dark God know? can he judge through the dark clouds? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of heaven*. Ezek. 8. 12. — *They say, The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth*. Is not this Blasphemy in God's Account, Rev. 2. 9. — *I know the Blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the Synagogue of Satan*. 4. The Name of Christ is wounded through the Sides of that Profession ye bear, therefore the Lord says to Israel, Ezek. 20. 39. — *Go ye, serve ye everyone his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts and your idols*. 5. Ye heap up Wrath to your selves, Ezek. 36. 13. The Hypocrite in Heart heaps up Wrath, ye heap up Temporal and Spiritual Judgments, and how terrible shall your Portion be when Death comes? Then all your delusive Hopes shall flee away, and ye shall see them no more, Job 11. 20. Chap. 27. 8: Then shall eternal Wrath be poured forth upon you.

I charge your Consciences to warn you of your Danger, and not to rest any longer on empty Forms of Religion, but flee to the Merits of Christ as the alone City of Refuge, and mind serious practical Godliness.

Secondly, The Exhortation speaks unto Children, who are heirs of God, and joynt-heirs with Christ; And these are either, 1. Such as are early started, as are Embrios under the first Workings of the Spirit and Word. 2. Compleat Births, converted and confirmed Souls. First, As to you who are under the first Workings of the Spirit and Word, I give these Advices, 1. Beware of mistaking this wakening Word, as Fancie, or natural Melancholly; but take it as a Messenger of the Living God to thy dead Soul. 2. Entertain it futeably to it's Concern and Weight, *Shall the lion roar and none be afraid?* 3. Take heed how you manage this picce of Work in Hand; for the Wound is given to the Heart, and the nearer the Heart the more dangerous, *Prov. 18. 14. — a wounded spirit who can bear?* Thy State to Eternity is at the Stake, thy All is betwixt losing and gaining: All Earthly Comforts avail nothing, *When God creates war, who can speak peace?* 4. Beware lest ye fall not on wrong Measures to be free of these Arrests laid on you by the Word, do not run to Recreations, as *Saul* to the Viol, and *Felix* to secular Affairs; do not break Prison before it be opened, by presumptuously taking hold of the VVord of Promise, before it be given of God. Secondly, The VVord speaks to you who are come through the Pangs of the new Birth, and are now Converted and Confirmed, the VVord hath had its powerful VVork on your Hearts, take ye these Advices: 1. Say with the Psalmist, *Magnifie the Lord with me, let us exalt his Name together*, Psal. 34. 3. *Praise him who ever magnified his word above all his great name. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: — The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: — More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: Sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb*, Psal. 19. 7, 8, 10. 2. Let your Carriage and Deportment evince the Truth of this Work of Grace on your Souls, if ye have seen the Mask pulled off the Face of that Monster Sin, in the Glass of God's Law, and your Hearts have been humbled and broken for it in the Days of your Distress, ye will choose the worst of Afflictions rather than Sin: *Therefore walk circumspectly, return not again to folly*, Psal. 85. 8: 3. Improve your Experience for the Good of others, sympathize with them when pierced with these Darts of the VVord, say, *Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul*, Psal. 66. 16. 4. Ye may find that in the VVord, that will answer all your Complaints and Murmurings, the God of Peace hath promised, *He will bruise Satan under your feet shortly*, Rom. 16. 20. *That sin shall not have dominion over you*, Rom. 6. 14. *That tho' in a little wrath he blide his face from thee for a moment, yet with everlasting loving kindness will he have mercy on thee*, Isa. 54. 8. *That he will come leaping over the mountains, and skipping over the hills of thy provocations*, Song 2. 8. *That he will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. *That thou shalt be kept by the power of God, through faith to salvation*, 1 Peter 1. 5. *That he will hear the prayers of the destitute*, Psal. 102. 17. *That he will send his Spirit to be your comforter, and teach you all things*, John 14. 26. *That he will keep thee from an hour of temptation*, Rev. 3. 10. *That all things shall work together for good*, Rom. 8. 28. Now, since he is faithful who hath promised all this to thee, Why should thou faint when thou art rebuked of him?

HEBREW S. XII. Verse 6.

For whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth.

IN this Text there is a Reason given why we should not faint under Divine Chastisement. As the redditive Conjunction *for* signifies, which is suited to answer all Objections against the Doctrine of Afflictions, and God's dealing with us in them. For they are all to be referred to the Sovereignty, Wisdom, Love and Goodness of God; thus he may do, for he is Sovereign, and thus he does, because it is for your Good, and therefore greatly expressive of his Love to you. And therefore it is requisite, that in all our Afflictions, we resign our selves unto the sovereign Pleasure, infinite Wisdom and Goodness of God, as the only Mean and Way to preserve us from Fainting, Weariness, or Neglect of Duty.

In the Words consider, *First*, Their Dependance on the preceding in the Particle *for*, Let us not faint, *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.* 2^{ly}, The Party Believers have to do with in all their Trials, *the Lord*, the absolute Sovereign, who can do with us as he pleaseth. 3^{ly}, *The Way* he exerts his Sovereignty toward them, *he chasteneth*, *scourgeth*; that is, he instructeth by chastising. 4^{ly}, *The Party or Persons* on whom he exerts this, not on every one, but upon them whom he loveth, and that with a special distinguishing Love, peculiar to his Children. 5^{ly}, A further step his Sovereignty proceeds to, *He scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth*; the Verb *scourgeth* signifies a peculiar Degree and Measure in Chastisement above what is ordinary, scourging is the outmost Measure that is used in *rewards*, or in fatherly Chastisements. It importeth that the Lord severely chastiseth above the ordinary Degree and Measure those Sons whom he accepts and delights in, in a peculiar manner. From the Words so explained,

Observe first, *That Love is a necessary Antecedent to Divine Chastisement.* So it is with every affectionate Father, he Chastens whom he Loves.

Observe 2. *That fatherly Chastisements be the Effects of Love*; they flow from it as from their Root and Spring.

Observe 3. *That Divine Love and Chastising be inseparable*; it is true there are different Degrees, some he only chastiseth, others he scourgeth.

Observe 4. *That where Chastisements evidence themselves not to be Penals, it is a broad Seal set to the Patent of our Adoption*; this is here asserted by the Apostle, and proven in the subsequent Verses.

Observe 5. *That this being the way of God's dealing with his Children, there is all Reason in the World why we should acquiesce, in his Sovereign Wisdom, and not faint under Chastisements.*

Observe.

Observe 6. That no particular Person hath Reason in the least to complain of his Share and Portion in Chastisements, seeing this is the way of God's dealing with all his Children, 1 Pet. 4. 12. Chap. 5. 9.

Observe 7. That our Sovereign God chastiseth severally above usual Degree and Measure these Sons whom he accepts of, and delights in, in a particular manner.

Tho' all these might be severally insisted on, yet because some of them have been touched at in the preceding Vellies; the Scope being the same, take the Sum of the Text in this.

Observe, That God in all the Afflictions, Chastisements and Scourgings of his People, hath a Love-Design on Foot. Or thus, That Chastisements and Scourgings to God's People are uncontroverted Documents of his most tender Love and Affection, Rev. 3. 19. Psal. 99. 8.

To open this Point, I shall, First, Prove the Truth of this Doctrine. 2ly, Shew what is the Nature of this Love of God, that is expressed to his People in their Chastisements: 3ly, That this is a Nonfuch Support from sinking and fainting. And then make practical Improvement of the whole.

First, That God carries on a Design of Love in all his Chastisements on Believers, appears, First, Because God hath linked his Love and his People's Chastisements inseparably together by the Promises of the New Covenant, Psal. 89. 32. 33. I will visit their Transgressions with the Rod, and their Iniquities with Stripes; nevertheless my loving Kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my Faithfulness to fail. 2ly, God hath condescended on this as his grand Design and Aim in them all, and so they cannot miss but gain this as their End, Isa. 27. 9. By this therefore shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away Sin, Heb. 12. 10. He chasteneth us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his Holiness. 3ly, His People attest it from their own Experience, we might call a Cloud of Witnesses, and find the whole Church attesting it in one Voice, Psal. 66. 12. Zech. 13. 9. and particular Persons, our Lord himself, Psal. 22. 24. Thou hast not despised nor abhorred the Affliction of the afflicted, neither hast he hid his Face from him, but when he cried, he heard. David, Psal. 23. 4. Tho' I walk through the valley and shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and Staff comfort me. Psal. 119. 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Ask Manasseh, and he will tell, That when he was in Affliction he besought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly, and God was intreated of him, 2 Chron. 33. 12, 13. 4ly, He reckons himself obliged to afflict them, in answer to his Faithfulness engaged, Psal. 119. 65. Thou hast dealt well with thy Servant according to thy Word. 1 Thess. 3. 3. That no Man should be moved by these Afflictions, for your selves know that we are appointed therewith. This proves his Love-Design. 5ly, They resolve in eternal Joy, 1 Pet. 4. 12, 13. Rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his Glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding Joy. 6ly, The Furnace of Afflictions is the usual place where he chuseth his People, Isa. 48. 10. I have chosen thee in the furnace of Affliction, in it was Manasseh called. 7ly, God in afflicting his People, proceeds not as a Judge, but as a Father; a Judge punishes the Offender, because the Law must be satisfied, and others deterred; but a Father from tender Affection, to make a Child shun what may impair his Love. Prov. 3. 11, 12. 8ly, So soon as the Love-Design is reached, the Affliction ceases, Isa. 10. 12. When the Lord hath performed this whole Work upon mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout Heart of the Kings of Assyria.

More particularly, a Sight of God's sovereign Hand, and of thy own sinful Hand puts thee to silence, saying, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, wherefore do

A living Man complain, a Man for the punishment of his Sin, Lam! 3. 34. this speaks Love, that Meat is come out of the eater. 2ly, When chastised nearer God by the Trial, as in Psa. 142. 4. 5. Psa. 116. 3. 4. As the natural Spirits in the Body retire inward, and get clost to the Heart in cold stormy Weather, so is it with the Lord's Friends in their Trials, Psa. 31. 9. 10. 3ly, When the Heart is weaned from, and Affections mortified to the World, an earthly Set worn off, and thou art now looking to things not seen. 4ly, When the Spices send forth an odoriferous Savour, the Graces all in Exercise, as Rom. 5. 3. 4. 5ly, The Soul is made to long for Heaven, when Earth is gone with its Comforts, then Heaven is welcome.

Secondly, I proposed to shew what is the Nature of God's Love to his afflicted People; here I shall, *First*, Prove he loves them. 2ly, Explain the Nature of it by a few of its Properties.

First, It is evident that the Lord loves his afflicted People, 1. By his love Expressions in the highest Strain of a Lover, Song 2. 10. *Rise up, my Love, my fair One, and come away, how sweet Love Songs doth he sing to the Commendation of his Spouse, Song Chap. 4. Chap. 7. he sits in a Love Posture, His left Hand is under my Head, and his right Hand doth embrace me. 2ly, By his Thoughts of us, he had these from Eternity, and ever since we were never out of his Mind one Moment, Isa. 49. 16. Song 8. 6. It is more impossible for him to forget us, than for a Nurse to forget her sucking Child which is still in her Arms, still on her Knee, or in her Bosom; we are his Jewels, his peculiar Treasure, Exod. 32. 5. And where the Treasure is, there will the Heart be. 3ly, This Love cannot be confined to Breast and Thoughts, but must necessarily flash out in Actions; what hath he done to us? He hath made us Rich, Honourable and Beautiful through his Comeliness put upon us, Ezek. 16. 14. If the Beauty of a sanctified Soul would be made visible to the World; the Sun's Glory should be eclipsed, and the fairest Face clouded with Darkness, he makes us one with himself, 1 Cor. 12. 12. John 17. 21, 22. 4ly, His Love appears by what he hath given us, his Heart hath opened, and sweet Love-Tokens flow out to us, these infinite Treasures which otherways had been eternally lock'd up. Nothing but what is Good, and all that is Good, whatever you can desire this Love is ready to give, *All is yours*, 1 Cor. 3. 22. but all this is far from the Hight of this uncreated Love, it Interests us in the all glorious Trinity. 5ly, Christ's Love appears by what he hath done for us, O how much hath he suffered by us, with us, and for us. *First*, Love hath made him suffer many things by us, to put up many Affronts and Indignities, Isa. 43. 24. *Thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins, thou hast wearied me with thine Iniquities. Ezek. 6. 9. I am broken with their morish Hearts. 2ly, Love makes him suffer many things with us, In all our Afflictions he is afflicted, Isa. 63. 9. Heb. 9. 14. 3ly, To suffer for us, he who by one Word made the vast Fabrick of Heaven and Earth start out of nothing for us, became so humble in the Form of a Servant, as he had no Cradle when born, no Place to lay his Head on while he lived, no Sepulchre to be laid in when dead.**

Secondly, The Nature of this Love may further appear, by a few of its Properties; As 1. It is Free, the time when he first cast his Mantle of Love over us, and said to us, *Live*, was, *when cast out to the open field, to the loathing of thy person, polluted in thy blood, Ezek. 16. 6. &c. 2. It is Unchangeable, Whom he loves he loves to the end, John 13. 1. Neither Death nor Adultery can divorce or separate the Believer who is married to Christ. 3. It is Incomprehensible, Ephes. 3. 17, 18, 19. — That ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and*

and depth, and height. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. There is no Measure, nor Scale in Nature to fathom the unsearchable Love of Christ; it is higher than Heaven, it carries Believers thither; It is deeper than Hell, it rescues and delivers from it; Its Length is from Eternity to Eternity, Its Breadth reaches Jew and Gentile, and all the *Elect World*. 4. It is a Fruitful Love, *All is yours, and ye are Christ's*, 1 Cor. 3. 21—23. How doth this Love warm cold Hearts, and goes down sweetly, *Causing the lips of them that are asleep to speak*. 5. It is of a distinguishing Nature, 1 Cor. 1. 26, 27. — *not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, nor many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty.*

Thirdly, I proposed to shew, That this Love of Christ, may be a notable Support to prevent sinking under Chastisements; And it appears, *First*, Because these who have his Love have himself; Heard thou ever of any that sunk in the Waters of *Marah* and a God in their Arms? No, it is impossible, he is All-sufficient: Is there not enough here to Ease the Weary, Relieve the Loaden, Refresh the thirsty Soul? A thousand times more in him than all the *VWorld* comes to. *VWould* you have more to keep up the Heart with? 1. There is all Good in him both for outward and inward Necessities of Soul and Body. 2. There is no Good to be had from external Comforts without God, and so they are not to be regarded without him, Riches are worse than well improved Poverty, *Micah 6. 14, 15. Haggai 1. 6, 7.* 3. God can communicate the Good of all these things to you, tho' they themselves cannot, and this he is All-sufficient to do, either by these things or without them. 4. Believe he can secure you from whatever you are solicitous to avoid, or ease you of whatever you are careful to be rid of, *Dan. 3. 16, 17.* — *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so; our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.* Job 5. 19. *He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.* 5. You have all the Reason in the *VWorld* to believe he is willing to do all this for you, *Psal. 34. 10.* — *they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* *Psal. 84. 11.* — *the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* Secondly, Can ye sink when he loves you? No, for his Love hath laid his Faithfulness in Pledge, all shall be well with you, *Isa. 3. 10.* Thirdly, Can ye sink when your Father is at the Helm, and gives you no grain more than what is necessary? Our topped Hearts are like to break, when we get not our Wills in this or that; Could we link our Wills into God's, no fear of sinking in Afflictions: For then Care and Trouble would be over. Fourthly, Chastnings flowing from Love, foreward and hasten your Fitness for the higher House, and should you then sink? *2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.* A Traveller that has but a Night to stay, will not be very anxious about his Accommodation, for he must be gone next Morning.

The practical Improvement I make of this *Doctrine*, shall be in Answering these two Questions, *First*, How to behave under Chastnings, so as to Improve them right, and get them to evidence Love? *Secondly*, How we are to Answer his great Love to us?

I Answer *Question* first by the following Advices, *First*, Make Conscience of complying with God's grand Design of Love by these Chastnings on his People, *viz.* to purge out your Iniquities, and do away your Sin, *Isa. 27. 9.* God has been contending with us in this Nation (beside our several Personal Trials) these Years bygone, by Sword, Fire and Famine: Now, what is the Lord's End in all this? Why? if he have any Mercy for this Nation, *By this should our Iniquity be purged, and this should be the Fruit thereof,*

Hebrews XII. Verse 6.

115

thereof, to do away our Sin: Yes, God hath visited us with more peculiar Chastisements, in our Cities, Congregations, Families, Relations, Estates, and Liberties; He hath broken us with breach upon breach, Job 16. 14. And after all that is come upon us, shall we wipe our Mouths and say, We are Innocent; Shall we say, He is at Peace with us, when his Hand is stretched out: O no! sure this Covenanted Nation hath highly provoked God; Yea, the Provocations of Sons and Daughters are among the greatest. This being our Case, what is our Duty, if we would prove this to be of Love? In Answer to the Lord's Call, let us mortifie Sin, cleanse our Heart and Life from it: Tho' others will not regard, yet let us see his Hand when it is so lifted up. Let me press this by some Considerations, 1. Otherways our Trials are like to continue, the Lord will swear in his wrath, that this Generation shall not enter into his rest, Psal. 95. 11. 2. If we comply not with this End, it shall increase our Trials, add more Weight, and put more Strength in them. If less will not serve to purge us from Sin, and prove his Love in our present and past Trials, we may expect a larger Doze: Who have lost but a Relation or two, may shortly be bereaved of all: [a] Who have but seen terrible Flames at Distance, when God in terrible Majesty marched through the stateliest Part of our City, may have it kindled round them for their next Share: Who but lost part of their Estates, if this part not them and their Sins, may be stripped naked of their All that remains, as the Lord threatens, Hosea 2. 3. 3. This shall multiply our Chastisings, making them come in as Waves & Billows in a Storm, Psal. 42. 7. The Depths above and below, the Displeasure of God and Wrath of Man, may correspond to pour out themselves as Water Spouts, calling on, and conspiring with one another against you: Can there be any thing worse than we have met with? Answer, If by what is come your Iniquities are purged, there would be no Fear; But, if not, know, that the Lords Treasure of Wrath is not yet exhausted, you have but yet tasted it, the worst of all the Dregs are at the Bottom. 4. The Lord may give you over, and refuse to Correct you any more, this puts the Cap-stone on Divine Wrath, when he looks on you as Bastards not as Sons, verse 8th. subsequent to the Text: Hos. 4. 17. Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone. 5. The Lord may leave you to Spiritual Judgments, the usual Result of despising the Lord's chastening Hand, External Afflictions are his Rods, but Spiritual Judgments his Swords: Blindness, Hardness, Searedness of Conscience, vile Affections, and a reprobate Sense, be the First Born of Second Death: Therefore comply with God's Love-Design in Chastening you, if not your Sin is highly aggravate: For 1. It is double Disobedience to the Word, and to the Rod, Jer. 2. 31. Micah 6. 9. 2. It is the Height of Impudence, for a Child beaten for a Fault, to tell his Father when the Rod is in his Hand, I will do it over again for all this. 3. It is Madness and Folly with a Witness, in stead of a Cure to swallow down a new Cup of Poison, thou art worse than a Child, the Rod of Correction will not drive away thy Folly, as it doth the Folly of a Child, Prov. 22. 15. 4. It evinceth the Height of Obduration, Jer. 5. 3. — Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return. This Stigmatized King Abaz, 2 Chr. 28. 22. And in the time of his distress did he measure yet more against the Lord: this is that King Abaz. 5. What Brutishness is in this Sin, the Horse and Mule is hemmed in with Bit and Bridle, the Ass stood when the Angel of the Lord stopped its Courser: But thou art worse than the Brutes who laughs at God's Sword, and will not be stopped from Sin by it.

[a] This was Preached sometime after the great Fire in the Parliament-Church, Edinburgh February 3. 1700:

A second Advice, If you would improve Afflictions and Trials, so as they may be Evidences of God's Love to you; Then from Faith of God's Sovereignty, and your own Demerit, kindly submit to, and acquiesce in what he lays on you; *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* — Micah 7. 9. It is the greatest Kindness God can do you, to Scourge and Chastise; Therefore say in your Master's Dialect, *Not my will but thy will be done.* It grows on a Love-root, and will you quarrel God for Love to you? Consider First, That in the Cloudiest Trial, the Promise appears as a Rainbow in the Cloud; Promises of his Presence, — *I will be with you in trouble.* — Psal. 91. 15. That he will lay *no more on you than what ye shall be able to bear.* 1 Cor. 10. 13. He will either make thy Yoke Lighter, or thy Faith Stronger. 2ly, In the severest of his Chastisements, he teaches some notable rich Lessons, without learning whereof, Man cannot be a Christian, would thou quarrel at being taught of God? He teacheth more Acquaintance with our own Hearts, when they are set on Fire by Afflictions, our Corruptions boil up a Scum we saw not before. There is an Edge put on the Spirit of Prayer, *Jonah* was asleep in the Ship, but at Prayer in the Whale's Belly, *Jonah* 2. 1. *Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer, when thy chastening was upon them.* Isa. 26. 16. Afflictions set you close and serious in clearing your Evidences for Heaven: In time of Prosperity, when the rock pours out rivers of oil, you are careless in getting, or at least in keeping clear the Title to Glory; But in Affliction, when the World is gone, then Heaven is welcome. 3. There is much Kindness in your Chastisements, and therefore take with and submit to them kindly; For, compare your Case with that of others, they are far deeper in the VVaters of *Morah* than you; Always on the Rack spending their Years in Fighting, *Psal.* 31. 10. *My life is spent with grief, my years with sighing.* Do you bear the wrath of Man, others bear the VVrath of God; You have but one single Trial, others have them twisted together, all thy VVaves and Billows go over me; Should not this cause us submit? 4ly, This is all the Hell you have Believers, and therefore it sets you to take it well; *Judas* had two Hells, one in Time, by Terror of his Conscience, another that endures to Eternity; But all the Hell Believers have, is this light affliction which is for a moment; Since it is so, cry out, *Welcome Chastisements, I acquiesce in them.* 5ly, VVere thy Furnace never so hot, consider whose Arms thou lies in, and then grudge thy Chastisements, if thou can, *Deut.* 33. 27. *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.* — 6ly, In his Chastisements: Mercy is mixed with Judgment, some Honey with your Gall, as a Limner mixes with his dark Shadows bright Colours; So the wise God mixes our Crosses and Consorts; The Body is afflicted, but within there is Peace of Conscience, *Job* lost all, his Body clothed with Boils and Ulcers, here was the dark-side of Providence; But God gave a Testimony from Heaven of his Integrity, and afterward doubled his Estate, *Job* 42. 10. *VVas not here Love? and wilt thou quarrel?* Yea, under it he sweetens the Cross with Divine Consolation, 1 Cor. 1. 4. He comforts by his VVord, *Psal.* 119. 50. *This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.* And also by his Spirit *David* had his Pilgrimage Songs, *Psal.* 119. 94; and *Paul* his Songs in Prison, *Acts* 16. 25. Thus he candies their VVormwood with Suggar, and makes them gather Grapes off Thorns. Some had such ravishing Joys under Chastisements and Afflictions, that they had rather endure their Sufferings, than want their Comforts: O then acquiesce therewith. 7ly, This Way of God's Dealing shall shortly end, *Isa.* 57. 16. *For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrath: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.* The VVicked may plough a while on the

Hebrews XII. Verse 6.

113

Back of the Saints, but God will shortly cut their cords. *Plat. 129. 4.* A Jubile will come. The Gold-smith will not let his Gold lie longer in the Furnace than it is purified. The VVicked have a Sea of Wrath to drink, but comfort Believers: you have but a Cup of Affliction, *Isa. 51. 17.* 85, It is a special Mean of Happiness, and will spise not thou the chastning of the Almighty. *Psal. 94. 12.* Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, — This is like *Moses's Wonder*, Turn aside and see this great sight, the bush burning, and not consumed, *Exod. 3. 2, 3.* So here is a strange Sight, a Man Chastened and Afflicted, and yet Happy: The Trial chases the Soul nearer to God, when the Prodigal Son was pinched, this put him to this Resolution, *I will arise and go to my father.* 95, Scourings and Chastnings are the beaten Road, here are the Footsteps and Print of the Cloud of Witnesses, it hath been God's ordinar to keep his People at a bitter Dyet-drink, and would thou be Singular? No, welcome Afflictions, for I see it is necessary that all the Stones of the Spiritual Building must be hewed and polished; Shall God's ordinary Way be changed for us? Must we walk on Roses, when Worthies marched through Briers and Thorns to Heaven? 106, God has done that for thee O Believer, that should make thee blush to take any thing ill out of his Hand; As 1. He hath brought thee from the Devil's Fire-side, struck off his Fetters, and set thee among the Bairns of his Family: *David* thought it no small Honour to be the king's son in law, *1 Sam. 18. 18.* O what then to be born of God! What? Art thou the King's Son, and yet these pettie Trials trouble thee? when they make way for the Crown. 2. God hath given thee Christ, he is the common Treasure, these Chastnings cannot be reckoned so Bitter as Christ is Sweet; *Seneca* in his Book *De Consolatione ad Polybium*, Cap. 21. says, The Affliction is not great, *Salvo Cesare*, while *Cesar* is alive; So, can thy Affliction be Great or Insupportable, while Christ is alive and thy Friend? Can that Man be reckoned Poor, who hath a Mine of Gold in his Field? Speak Believer, Hast thou the unspeakable riches of Christ? Therefore welcome the Cross, seeing I have my Christ with it. 3. God hath given thee Grace to adorn thee, that Sacred Unction, *1 John 2. 27.* Let there be no Competition betwixt thy Gold and thy Grace in thy Afflictions, let go the Former to retain the Latter; for this is a Seal of his Love under all thy Chastisements, yea, an Earnest of Glory.

115, Consider, It is much safer to be under Christ's Chastisements, than under the World's Blandishments; tho' more Sensual Pleasure, yet less Spiritual Gain in them, therefore submit. 1. There is a carking Care, and painful Solicitude attending the World's alluring Vanities, tho' we think them Happy that flourish in their Silks, a Shoe may have Gold Lace on it, and yet pinch the Foot: Many a fore wrought Man may have a more contented Life, than he who hath Thousands a Year; when his Coffers are full Gold, his Heart is full of Care, how to increase or secure what is got, or to whom to leave it. 2. Great Men's Accounts are larger than thine, *Luke 12. 48.* — *to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required*; — the more Revenues, the more they have to reckon for; I gave you a great Estate, How employed ye it for my Glory? A great Prince when dying cried, *O that I had Lived a Bourgeois when I did Reign a King*, this is all the Fruit of my Royal State, it hath made my Account heavier. Therefore embrace your Chastisements with all Submission. 3. There is more Danger in Prosperity, the higher set the more Danger of falling, too great a Sail Overturns a Vessel, the World's golden Sands are quick Sands.

1stly, Does God Chasten whom he Loves? Then, how unworthy is it in a Believer not to submit to these Chastisements: For 1. It is below his Spirit, which should be Still, Meek, Sedate, and at God's Disposal, *Phil. 4. 12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound.* 2. It is unworthy a Christian's Profession, he professes to live by Faith, now Faith feeds not on Bread alone, it feeds on the Promises, it makes future Glory pleasant; Faith finds all Comforts in God, when Creature Comforts fail, *The fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail.* — Yet Faith will joy in the God of Salvation, *Hab. 3. 17, 18.* If thou be troubled at present Chastisements, where is Faith? Surely that is not Faith, or it is very weak that needs Crutches to support it: O! be ashamed to call thy self a Believer, if thou canst not trust God, and acquiesce in his Will, in the Deficiency of External Comforts. 3. It is unworthy of the high Privileges conferred on a Christian; For 1. He is a rich Heir, exalted above all Creatures God ever made, except Angels, yea, in some respect, above Angels, as his Nature is joined in an Hypostatic Union with the Divine Nature. 2. The Believer is Espoused to Christ, What? Married to Christ, and yet not embrace his Chastisements kindly? Hast thou not enough in him? As *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, *Am not I better to thee than ten Sons?* Is not Christ worth a thousand Comforts? 4th, Unsuitable and unworthy of the Prayers of a Believer, he prays, *Thy will be done*, it is God's Will thou be thus Chastised and Scourged, why then not yield Cheatsfully?

More Particularly, If ye would so Behave, as to have your Chastisements speaking out Love, take these further Advices. First, Be full of Consideration, — *in the day of adversity consider:* — *Eccles. 7. 14.* Consider the Vanity of the Creature, the Evil of Sin, which is the Cause of all Miseries, and that God's Design is for thy Good. 2ly, Justify God in all his Procedure, *Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin.* 3ly, Be much in Self-searching, what is the Cause of God's Contending? 4ly, Be serious in Prayer, *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray,* *James 5. 13.* 5ly Relinquish thy self to God and his Disposal, without any Reservation. It is probable you may

Object, First, If I knew my Affliction were from Love, I would take it well? But that is my Doubt. Answer 1. If the Affliction set thy Affections on Work, to glorify God, to be feared of Sin, to love the Lord, and to be concerned in Prayer, this is a good Token, *Psal. 116. 1, 2, 3, 4.* 2ly, Have ye Christ's Teaching, Strengthening, Sanctifying, Humbling, and Reviving Presence with you under Trouble? Then take it as an Evidence of Love, *Psal. 94. 19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* *Isa. 43. 2. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.* 3ly, Art thou willing to lie in the Furnace till thy Dross be consumed? *Job 23. 10. Malacah 7. 9.* Art thou crying, Lord remove the Cause rather than the Effect, take away my Corruption rather than my Affliction.

Objection Second, How can I reckon my Chastising in Love, since it is so long continued? Answer, First, Thy Mercies and Comforts continue longer than thy Crosses. 2ly, Thy Trials continue not so long as thy Sins have done, which have been in thee since thy Conception in the Womb, *Psal. 51. 5.* 3ly, The Afflictions of others have continued longer, *Psal. 88. 15. I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up.* The Children of *Israel* were in the Furnace in *Egypt* four hundred Years, *Gen. 15. 12, 13.* 4ly, The longer thy Affliction ly upon thee, the sweeter will Heaven be at the last, *Thy sowing in tears, shall reap in joy,* — *Psal. 126. 5, 6.* 5ly, They are but short when compared with long endless Eternity of Glory reserved in Heaven for you; While under the Cross, fix your Eye on the Crown; One Moment in Christ's Bosom in the higher

Houe

Hebrews XII Verse 5.

117

House, will make thee for ever forget all thy Chastisements. *Why, They give you more Experiences of the Love and Care of Christ, when his Spouse is in the millstone, then he allures her, and speaks comfortably to her, Hosea 2. 14. 2. Cor. 1. 5.*

The second Question I proposed in order to the Practical Improvement of the *Desire*, is, How are we to Answer God's Love appearing in our Chastisements? *Answer, If ye would Improve this high Dignity suitably, ye must, First, Admire his Love, the Believer's Furnace flames with it. Secondly, Carry so as ye may be capable of his Love.*

First, Admire and wonder at Christ's matchless Love, consider this is the most wonderful Object was ever presented to the View of Heaven or Earth, wonderful is Christ's Attribute, Isa. 9. 6. First, Consider whom he loves, 1. How vile and contemptible are Men, Job 25. 6. How much less man than is a worm, and the son of man which is a worm? We dwell in cottages of clay, and are crushed before the moth. 2. How Impotent, we cannot do nothing to engage or deserve Love, this makes it more wonderful. Can the Lame Walk, the Dead Rise, the Blind see? Such were Men when he entertained thoughts of Love to them, Revel. 3. 17. Ephes. 2. 1. Rom. 5. 6. 3. How Poor is Man? as Poor as the Devil could make him, no such Poverty as Mark, he is nothing, can do nothing, Yea, is infinitely drowned with Debt, both to Mercy and Justice, see his Case described, Ezek. 16. 6. Some Degrees below Misery, below Pity, and yet this was a Time of Love, he not only wants all Things, but he owes more than he is worth, he has given his Soul to Satan, and Satan hath him in Possession; Yet notwithstanding of that he loves him, O admire! 4. How Deformed? Beauty is Love's usual Attractive, but nothing of that here, Who can love Deformity? He was created Fair and Lovely, his Ornament was the Beauty of Heaven, the Image of God; But no sooner came he out of the Calms God had cast him in, but he dropped into the Devil's Arms, who drew his Picture on him, all full of Sores and Boils, Isa. 1. 6. Yet the Lord loves him. 5. How is Man hated of all? Who would love him whom none loves? All the Workers of Iniquity are hated of God, the Wrath of God is their Inheritance entailed on them. And, will Christ love them whom even his Father hates? Angels and Saints have the same Friends and Enemies with God, the Inferior Creatures, yea, the Inanimate Beings groan by Reason of Man's Corruption by Sin, Rom. 8. 20, 21. 6. Man is a Hater of Christ, and hates Christ and all that is his, and all that is like him, and this Hatred is causeless, and perfect without any Mixture of Love, Imputable: And yet O wonder! Christ loves his Enemies, Rom. 5. 10. 7. After Man is overcome by this Love, yet how easily is he engaged to Christ's deadly Enemies, Sin and Satan, Who would love one for a Wife that is contracted to another, and hath her Heart and Self in his Possession? These have Man's first Love, Christ gets but the Leavings of Devil and Sin; They get the first Fruits, and Christ but the Gleanings.

A second Ground for admiring the Love of Christ, is from Consideration of who is the Lover, Christ. 1. In him the Glory of Heaven and Excellency of Earth do center, he is fairer than the Children of Men, Psal. 45. 2. Yea, infinitely beyond Angels, what Beauty is in the Angelick Nature, is to his but like a Glow-worm to the Sun, it dazzles their Eyes, and makes them cover their Faces with their Wings, Isa. 6. 2. And yet this blessed Jesus matches with a deformed loathsome Worm, and vents his Love on it. 2. How Glorious as well as Beautiful, Heb. 1. 3. He is the brightness of the Father's Glory, and yet he loves that which is the shame of the whole Creation, and which most impairs his

his Glory: *3. His happy.* Man cannot add so much to Christ, as a Drop to a vast Ocean, or a Spark to the Sun, being infinitely happy in himself: Men now love, that they may be more Happy, have more Delight, Contentment, Abundance, or Assistance; but Christ stood in need of none of these, and Man hath none of them to give him; and yet he loves them. *4. He knows all that might discourage him from loving Man;* this makes his Love the more wonderful.

Third Ground of admiration is from the Consideration of how Christ loves Man.
 1. More than the best of Men love one another, no humane Breast can contain so much Love as moveth in the Heart of Christ: it is greater than that of the dearest or nearest Relation, *John 15. 13. Greater Love hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends.* Christ's Love comprizeth the Love of all Relations, O admire it!
 2. More than a Man loves himself, Philosophers tell us, Self-love is the Cause of all other Love, therefore all greatest: A natural Man loves his Body but not his Soul, neither loves he his Body in order to Eternity, but only in Reference to Time, he seeks but Corn, Wine and Oil, but Christ gives the Light of his Countenance, he loves both Soul and Body of his Elect People, in order to their eternal Happiness.
 3. More than he loves Angels, *Heb. 2. 16. He took not on him the nature of Angels, but of the seed of Abraham,* there is no fallen Angels loved by the Death of Christ.
 4. More than Heaven and Earth, more than Earth, all the Kingdoms of the World were offered to him if he would put himself out of Capacity to love and redeem Man, *Math. 4. 8. 9.* but he rejects it with Disdain, *Get thee behind me Satan. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* He left Heaven for Love to Man, and came and sojourned among Strangers, exposed himself to the Sorrows of Hell instead of the Joys of Heaven, O wonder!
 5. He loves Man as himself, for he advanceth him to the same State with himself, so far as Man is capable, and gives him all things himself hath, so far as they are communicable; the same Nature, Offices, Privileges and Enjoyments: He takes what is done to his People as done to himself, *Luke 10. 16. He that heareth you, heareth me, Matth. 23. 30. In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.*
 6. In some respects better than himself, as Man: for he will suffer rather than Man do it, he prayed more for Man than for himself, this is an Evidence of the strongest Love.
 7. As the Father loves him, so he loved Man, *John 15. 9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; His Love to us is permanent, constant and perfect, as the Father's Love is to himself.*

Secondly, How may you be capable of this his wonderful Love? Answer 1. Ye must be like him, Likeness is the Foundation of Love; this was the first Act of eternal Love, *Rom. 8. 29. Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate, to be conform to the Image of his Son.* Set the Life of Christ before you as a Copy, and write your Lives after it.
 2. Avoid all that Christ hates, if ye love what he hates, how can he love you, the Lusts of your Hearts, and Sins of your Lives are his Enemies.
 3. Be obedient to his preceptive and to his providential Will, on this Condition Christ engageth his own and his Fathers Will to love you, *John 14. 23. If a Man love me, he will keep my Words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*
 4. Be much in Christ's Company, as David, continually with him; Neglect of Converse dissolves Friendship and cools Love, Converse with him in Ordinances and Duties.
 5. Be not unkind to him in your Returns, by undervaluing him, his Love cannot endure Sights, nor that any thing should be more loved and delighted in, and set up as Christ's Conival. Neither refuse his Offers which we bring in his Name in this

Hebrews XII. Verse 7.

339

this Gospel, his Spirit comes with warning Motions, himself, hands and knees, at you shut the Door, and put him off with Excuses, how terrible is your Sin. 6. *Keep up Love to him, this is the way to get a larger Share of his Love.* Prov. 8. 17. *Love them that love me.* John 14. 21 & 23. *Love him in his Works, in his Ways, in his People, in his Offices, and he will Love you, and make his Chastnings Seals of Love.*

H E B R E W S XII. Verse 7.

If ye endure chastning, God dealeth with you as with Sons. For what Son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?

THIS Text contains no new Argument, but an Inference from, and particular and special Application of the foregoing; seeing whom he Loves he Chastens, therefore, *If ye endure chastning, God dealeth with you as with Sons.* Wherein, Consider, First, A Supposition of the Performance of the Duty enjoined, *If ye endure chastning*, if you comply with the Exhortation, not to despise the chastning of the Lord, nor faint when rebuked of him, but patiently endure. The Word *endure* is never used in the New Testament but to express a Grace in Duty, so it hath been twice used in this Chapter already, Verse 1, 2, for patient enduring; and there is no Reason here to assign another Sense to it. *If ye endure*, that is, with Patience, Faith, Submission and Perseverance, so as not to faint.

Secondly, The rich Advantage gained by this Duty of enduring, *God dealeth with you as with Sons.* The whole Import of the Word *dealeth* is not expressed by *he dealeth with you*, it signifies, He presents himself unto you as a Father to his Children, he acts not as an Enemy, not as Judge, not as towards Strangers, but as towards Children; hereby it will evidently appear even to your selves, that God so carries toward you.

Thirdly, In the Text we have an Illustration of the whole, by alluding to the common Custom among Men, *For what Son is he whom the Father chasteneth not*; think not strange hereof, it is that which necessarily follows the Relation, the Apostle doth not take Allusion from Matter of Fact, but from Right and Duty; for there are too many Sons that are never chastised of their Fathers, which ends in their Ruin, but it supposeth, First, That every Son more or less needs Chastisement. 2^d, That every wise tender Father will in such Cases chasten his Son, it is a Duty suitable to their Relation, and so God in Chastning Believers dealeth with them as Sons. From the Text, Observe 1. That Afflictions endured with Patience, are Seals appended to the Patent of our Adoption, Pledges of Sinship.

Observe 2. That it is the Internal Frame of Heart and Mind under Afflictions and Chastisements, that receives a Sense of God's Design of Love toward us in them: That will fit us every Grace, so to set it self as to beget in the Soul as secret Evidence of the Love of God, and a View of him as a Father. For the Word *endure* signifies always

always such an Exercise of Grace, as is joined with Submission, Patience and Perseverance.

Observe 3. That the way of dealing, that God should chastise, and Believers bear it patiently, becomes the Relation of Father and Children that is betwixt God and his People.

I return to Observe First, That Afflictions endured with Patience, are Seals appended to the Patent of our Adoption, Pledges of Sonship.

To prepare this *Discourse* for our Use, I shall enquire, First, How Afflictions patiently endured do seal our Adoption? Secondly, How we may be helped to endure them patiently?

Enquiry first, How Afflictions patiently endured do seal our Adoption? To this I Answer in general, By discovering, imbittering, curing and removing those Sins, and that Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, which clouded and obscured our Patent of Adoption, and working in us the Disposition of Sons.

More particularly, 1. Afflictions patiently endured discover Sin, when Joseph's Brethren were imprisoned in Egypt, they said one to another, *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother*, Gen. 42. 21, 22. The Lord led the Israelites forty Years through the Wilderness to humble and prove them, and see what was in their Heart, Deut. 8: 2: 2. They aggravate and imbitter it, the Sins that seemed small in Prosperity like little Molehills, prove bitter, grievous and heavy like Mountains, Psal. 38. 3, 4. *There is no soundness in my Flesh because of thine Anger, neither is there any rest in my Bones because of my Sin, mine Iniquities are gone over mine Head, as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.* Job 12. 26. *Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the Iniquities of my Youth.* 3. They cure and cleanse Sin, Psal. 119. 67. *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy Word.* What a Change did Afflictions work on Manasseh, 2 Chron. 33. 12, 13. 4. Afflictions seal our Adoption by working such Dispositions in us as becomes Sons, making the proud stoop and be humble, it makes such as were Brutish before, now to act as Men, Jer. 31. 18. *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God.* 5. By chastising stubborn Children that were a wandering home to their Father's House, crying, *Have Mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in Trouble*, Psal. 31. 9. Psal. 142. 4, 5. *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no Man that would know me; refuge failed me; no Man cared for my Soul: I cried unto thee, O LORD, I said, Thou art my Refuge, and my Portion in the land of the living.* 6. Afflictions patiently endured, seal our Adoption, by removing from us a carnal and earthly Disposition of Mind, which blinds our Eyes that we cannot read our Title to Sonship. 7. By working in us these Graces to which Adoption is promised, Rom. 5. 3, 4. *Tribulation works Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope*, Heb. 12. 10. the Lord chastens us, *That we may be partakers of his holiness.* 8. By working in Believers strong Desires, fervent and insatiable Pantings for Communion with God in the higher House: when David was in the barren Wilderness where no Water was, no earthly Comforts, then how did he thirst for God? Psal. 62. Psal. 42. In Prosperity we are hurried by the lying, dying Vanities of the World, but when God snatches these out of our Fingers, then we cry, O for God.

Enquiry second, How we may be helped to endure these Afflictions patiently? Answer first, By believing God's Will in these is thy Will; and therefore good Reason to endure and further believe that his Will is Sovereign, *Matth. 26. 15. It is not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* He hath a Right to dispose of thee as

Hebrews XII. Verse 7.

127

he pleases. Believe that it is a wise VWill. *He. 10. 12.* The Lord will make that he may be gracious unto you. Got we our VWill, we would undo our selves: for chuse Solomon because it was well watered, but God kindled fire on it. Believe that his Will is just. *Gen. 18. 25.* Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right? God's Will is also irresistible. *Rom. 9. 19.* Who hath resisted his Will? and therefore it is in vain to oppose it. And finally, Believe that it is a gracious Will, it's End is to advance our true Interest, his Rod separates us and our Lusts, and what is against our Will, shall not be against our Profit. *25.* In order to bear Afflictions patiently, get an Heart seasoned with the Grace of God, all other Means shall be utterly ineffectual till Grace be infused, this only over-rides the VWill to comply with what God requires. *26.* Get your Evidences cleared up, the Truth of your Covenant Interest uncontested, that ye may say, *The Lord is my God for ever and ever, he will be my guide even unto death. Psal. 138. 14.* A graceless Body may say, *God hath done this, I cannot help it.* But the Believer may say, *26.* God hath done it, I cheerfully comply with it, all he sends in my way, I own. *27.* Get a subdued and humble Frame of Spirit, a proud Man will break before he bow: Hence see a vast Difference betwixt a Pharisee, *Ex. 10. 2.* What is the Lord that I should obey him and Eli saying, *1 Sam. 2. 12.* It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. *28.* Get the Will of God, when the World is turned off the Throne and set upon the Foot-stool. *29.* Secure the Pardon of thy Sin, *Sinners* *[A]* *Adelchior* as thou wilt, cryed *[B]* *London, I take all in good part, seeing my Sin are* *Adam* in *ruin* pardoned; Pardon of Sin is the Crown of Blessing, *I will bear any thing, I will not let it be* *will be* *in my Quelling into Admiring, I will welcome the pruning Knife* *168.* *spring there is no fear of the bloody Axe to fall me down.* *29.* Eye more the Inside of the Trial, that is lined with Love, than the Out-side which carries the Cloud in its Face; the former to Sense, carries Loss, but the latter to Faith's Eye is fraught with Gain: It humbles, purifies, and fills us with the Consolations of God, there is much Honey in the Belly of this Lion, that will make us cry, *It is the Lord, all is mine, comes from his Hand.* *30.* Give your selves to Prayer, that he may make a Conquest of your restless Will; There will be Risings of Heart when Sense is Gain-said, against which Prayer is the best of Antidotes, when our Will is ready to Mutiny, Prayer calms it: *93.* Interpret God's Way in the best Sense, we are in Hazard to put a bad Commentar upon it, *Numb. 20. 4.* And why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into the wilderness, *change and our counsel should die there?* *31.* Be candid and generous in your thoughts of God's Dealings with you, think, perhaps he intends Mercy in this, he is trying whether I will love him in the Furnace, he is mortifying some Sin, carrying off some Idol. *32.* Believe that that you meet with is best for you, we are not competent Judges our selves, we judge it best for us to have the rock pouring out rivers of oil, but God sees this Trial far better, which could we believe the Quagmire should soon be at an End. *Use First. Of Information.* *1.* That our gracious, wise, and loving God knows best what is most proper for us. *2.* That our Duty lies in Submission to what he hath measured out to us. *3.* That if we do so, we shall find even more of the new, rich Gain & Mysteries which the World are Strangers to. *Use Second. Of Reproof and Conviction* to such as are apt to quarrel God's Way with them. *Consider, This is most Sinful, First.* In its Nature, to murmur what God

God crosses us in our Wills, is great Impiety, *Job* v. 15, 16. The Lord interprets it as an Act of Rebellion, *Numb.* 17. 16. As striving with the Lord, *Job* 20. 12. It is a Shame for a Servant to strive with his Master, much more for a Creature to strive with its Creator. 2^{ly}, It is sinful in the Original and Root of it, which is Pride, it was Satan's first Temptation, — *ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*, *Gen.* 3. 5. A proud Person makes a God of himself, he disdains to have his Will crossed, thinks himself better than others, and therefore finds Fault with God's Wisdom. 3^{ly}, Quarrelling with God is sinful in its Concomitants. As 1. It is joined with sinful Ruminations of the Heart, evil Thoughts hence arise, as if God had wronged us, or as if we had deserved better at his Hand. 2. Passions rise, the Heart secretly begins to fret against God, as *Jonah* 4. 1. He was exceedingly displeased, and very angry. 3. With Unthankfulness, because in some one thing we are crossed, we forget all the Mercies we have; We deal with God as the Widow of *Sarepta* did with the Prophet, he had been a Mean to keep her alive in Famine, but no sooner her Child dies, than she quarrels with the Prophet, *1 King* 17. 18. She said to *Elijah*, — *What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my son to repentance, and to slay my son?* 4^{ly}, This Quarrelling is Sinful in its Effects; For 1. It hurts for Duty, it is ill sailing in a Storm, and as ill Praying, when the Heart is in a Storm of Disquiet and Quarrelling with God, such Prayers are in Hazard of suffering Ship-wreck. 2. It hurts for the Use of Reason, *Jonah* is Discontented because he had not his Will, and in midst of his Passion he spoke None sense and Blasphemy, *Jonah* 2. 9. — *I am well to be angry even unto death.* He knew not what he said, What? to be angry with God and die for anger? He speaks as if he had lost the Use of his Reason.

Secondly, As this Quarrelling with God is Sinful, so it is Impudent, we get nothing by it; it does not ease us of our Burden, but makes it heavier; The more the Child struggles with the Parent, the more it is beaten; So when we strive with God, we get nothing but more Blows, and makes the Cross heavier. *Israel* was within eleven Days Journey to *Canaan*, and by their Muzzling they provoke God to lead them forty Years March in the Wilderness.

Thirdly, It exposes Man to a Variety of Temptations, when the Heart frets at God's Way, these troubled Waters are a brave fishing time for Satan; So *Job's* Wife fretted, and presently Satan puts her to tempt her Husband to curse God, — *Job* 2. 9. Hence some have turned Witches, and given themselves to the Devil, through Discontent, because they got not their Wills.

Use Third, Of Exhortation, As ye would have your Afflictions seal your Admiration, endure them patiently; For 1. That is most agreeable to that Temper of Soul God requires in Affliction, God would have us thus, *In patience possess your souls*, *Luke* 21. 19. The Greek word for Patience *καυχή*, signifies to bear up under a Burden without fainting or fretting, if ye quarrel where is this Patience? God would have us rejoice in them, *James* 1. 2. — *count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*, be as Birds that sing in Winter. *Paul* could leap in his Fetters, and sing to the Stocks, *Acts* 16. 25. How far is a discontented Soul from this Frame? 2. This is a discriminating Difference betwixt an Un-godly Man and a Godly, to acquiesce in God's Dealing. A wicked Man frets like a wild Bull in a Net — *Blasphemes God*, — *Revel.* 16. 9. Put a Stone in a Fire it flies in your Face, but a serious Soul is at that Frame, *Shall not I drink the cup which my Father has given me?* 3. Not to endure is highly provoking to God, Can we displease God worse, than not allow him to have his Will? *Numb.* 14. 26,

27. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against me? 28. How much doth God bear at one time; and shall not we beat at his? It would out-weary Angels Patience to bear with us but one Day, Shall he endure our Sins, and we not endure his Chastisements? 29. Let us endure, for this shall quite disappoint Satan of his Designs against us, his Aim is to cause us Sin, had the Sparks of Job's Corruption blown up, the Devil had warmed himself at the Fire, but he quietly yielded, and so the Devil was disappointed. 30. To Believers the Nature of the Affliction is quite changed; To the Graceless the Rod is turned to a Serpent, being an Effect of Divine Displeasure; But to the Believer it is turned to a Blessing, a Poison corrected, that turns Medicine, a Badge of Adoption, a Foretaste of After-glory, Psal. 119. 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted: — Job 1. 21. — The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. 7. Shall we not endure some evil things at his Hand, when we enjoy so many good things? Job 2. 10. How many are his sparing, preventing, supporting, and comforting Mercies, Lam. 3. 23. His mercies are new every morning. We never feed but Mercy carves every Bit for us, we never drink but in a Golden Cup of Mercy, we never go Abroad without a Guard of Angels about us, we never lie down in Bed but Mercy draws the Curtains close for our Protection. 8. Thus to endure Patiently pays a great deal of Honour and Regard to the Gospel, it is weak Physick cannot purge out ill Humors, a cheerful Resignation of our Wills to God's, sets a Crown of Honour on the Head of Religion: Hence submissive Patience is brought in as an adorning Grace, Rom. 14. 22. Here is the patience of the Saints. 9. Let us endure in answer to the Pattern of Christ our Master, how flexible and submissive was he to his Father's Will, He endured the Cross, despising the shame, he opened not his mouth, Isa. 53. 7, when the Flood-gates of Hell were opened on him. 10. Thus to endure is the Way to get our Wills, the nearest Cutt to get our Wills, is to resign it, to David when banished from his House, and from the House of God, 2 Sam. 15. 23, 26. says, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good to him. So he got his Will, God brought him back to the Ark, and settled him on his Throne, 2 Sam. Chap. 19. 11. We may more cheerfully resign our Souls to God when we die, than we surrendered our Wills to him while we lived; Christ had but one Will with the Father while he lived, and at Death he cheerfully gives up his Soul to him, Luke 23. 46. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

Use Fourth, For Caution, See that you mistake not Afflictions and Chastisements, they come from a wise God, they are all of his prescribing; They have their Light-side as well as their Dark, 2 Cor. 1. 5. How sweet can God make them? O! Let us not have such hard Thoughts of Afflictions, looking on them through the magnifying Glass of slavish Fear. There is a four-fold Errand they come upon, in order to sealing you up among the Children. 1. To prove and try if ye have the Children's Livery, Psal. 66. 10. 11. Thou O God, hast proved us, thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net, thou laidst affliction upon our loins. 2. To Cleanse and Sanctifie us, Chaff will burn in the Fire, but Gold will purifie. 3. To draw our Graces to Exercise, he bruises his Spices that they may savour the more. 4. To make us weary of this strange Country, and long to be at Home.

If it be asked, How differ the Afflictions of Sons and of Enemies? Answer 1. The former is only *waikwa*, the other *ruwaka*, the one from a Father, the other from a Judge.

2. Sons are Bettered, but Enemies are made Worse by them, the Believer pays more, *Psalm 136. v. One of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.* But the Wicked blaspheme the more, *Revel. 16. v. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the Name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not, to give him glory.* Every Plague upon Egypt increased the Plague of Pharaoh's hard Heart, 3. On Sons they are Fruits of Covenant-Mercy, *2 Sam. 7. 14.* — If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. But on the Wicked they are the Effects of Wrath, *Eccles. 5. 17.* — he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness. But O happy chastened Believer! for thou art made Partaker of God's Holiness, *Heb. 12. 10.* Thou becomes more in God's Favour, *Prov. 3. 12.* The purer the Gold be, the more is it valued. Thou gains more of God's sweet, supporting and sanctifying Presence, *Psalm 91. 14, 15.* And the more Chastisements thou endures here, the more Glory thou shalt enjoy hereafter; the lower in the Iron-furnace, the higher on Christ's Throne; the heavier thy Cross, the massier thy Crown.

Use Fifth, Of Terror, To those who are Enemies to God, if thou he treat Sons, what will he do with you? If so severe to them he loves, what will he do with them he hates? *1 Pet. 4. 17.* For time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall be of them that obey not the gospel of God? If God thresh his Wheat, he will burn his Chaff; if he mingle the Cup of Sons with Gall, he will mix the Slaves with Fire and Brimstone.

Observe second, That is in the Internal Frame of Heart and Mind under Afflictions and Chastisements, that receives a Sense of God's Love-Design toward us in them: That will stir up every Grace to act it self, so as to beget in the Soul a secret Evidence of the Love of God and View of him as a Father. For the word *Amor* is never used in the New Testament, but to express Embrace of Grace in Duty, if ye endure with Faith, Submission, Patience, and Perseverance, so as not to faint:

In opening this Doctrine, I shall, First, Enquire what are these Ingredients of this desirable Frame under Chastisements. 2ly, Of what Use and Influence these are to help us to endure.

Enquire first, What are these Ingredients and Requisites in an enduring Frame? Answer, There be these few leading Principles to animate the Soul under Chastisements. First, Faith, I had fainted, unless I had believed, *Psalm 27. 13.* By Faith Moses refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a Season. 2ly, Love makes the Soul like the kindly Child draw nearer the more it is beaten, others to their Heels and run for it, after the Fashion of old Adam, when they hear the Voice of the Rod, they run and hide themselves. 3ly, Self-denial, If Self be not dethroned, the shaking of a Spear will make you run. 4ly, Experience will make thee conclude with David, *He that delivered me out of the paw of the Lion, and out of the paw of the Bear, he shall deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.* 1 Sam. 17. 37. 5ly, Patience kindly acquiescing in the Chastisement, as God's Determination. 6ly, Hope, expecting Good from a gracious God.

Secondly, I am to enquire of what Use and Influence these are to make us so endure, as we may read our selves Sons of God, and see his Design of Love. I begin with the first Ingredient of this enduring Frame, Faith: This is, Puts the Believer into a safe and secure Condition among the Children, shewing all is fair and well stated between God and the Soul: A Man is not troubled with Fears when he knows his Life is pro-

too good to suffer for Christ. 2. This will sink any Opinion of your own Judgment and Wisdom, if this be wanting, ye will think *the preaching of the Cross of Christ Foolishness*, 1 Cor. 1. 18. 3. This Grace will put you above the Reach of your own Reasonings, some reason themselves out of the Reach of Chastisements; it is too small a Matter (says carnal Reason) to lose all, endure all, for it is not clear but controverted among Men of Learning. 4. This Grace will free you of your own stiff and peremptory Will, causing you cry, *No my will but shine be done*, if this be wanting, ye will never endure chastising but by Force, as a Brute or a Slave. 6. By denying your own Inclinations, he who will never cross these, will never endure Christ's Cross. 7. Denying your own Ease and Contentment, if this be not done, it is impossible to endure, *Jer. 12. 5. If thou hast run with the Footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with Horses? and if in the Land of Peace wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan?* 2 Tim. 2. 3. *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ.*

A fourth Ingredient to help to an enduring Frame, is a Stock of Experiences, remembering the Years of the right Hand of the most High, your sweet *Betel* times: This will make you reason thus with your selves, 1. This is not the first Chastisement, I can remember God's Kindness from *Jordan*, and from *Mizar*, I can mind since he delivered me from the paw of the Lion and of the Bear, and he is the same God still. 2. I can mind when he suffered the Winds to blow high, and the Sea to rage, even then he made my Extremity his Opportunity, then he came and walked on the Waves, and and cried, *It is I, be not afraid*: Well, *he is a God that changes not*, therefore I will endure his Chastisements. 3ly, I remember how under Chastisements he freighted me with many Love-Tokens from himself; as, 1. He heard my Prayers, *Psal. 130. 1. Psal. 116. 1, 2, 3, 4.* 2. He intimate to my Soul the Pardon of my Sin, saying, *Son be of good cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee*, *Matth. 9. 2.* since the Sting is taken away, the Chastising may be easily endured. 3. He shed abroad his Love in my Heart when he brought me in to the Banqueting-house, and filled my Soul with Apples of the Tree of Life, so that Joy swallows up my Sorrows, and my Chastisings resolve in Consolations. 4. I have found to my Experience the Accomplishment of Covenant-Promises suitable to the Trials, *Psal. 119. 50. This is my Comfort in my Affliction, for thy Word hath quickened me.* *Psal. 94. 19. In the multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul.*

The fifth and last Ingredient I name in this enduring Frame is Hope, cut off this, the Soul presently sinks, but this props it up in Life. Soul, tell me what is thy Chastising, and I will tell thee something in Hope to bear thee up under it.

First, Some complain, The Lord chastens me with Desolation, the Comforter that relieved my Soul is far away: *Oh that I were as in Months past, as in the Days when God preserved me; when his Candle shined upon my Head, and when by his Light I walked through Darkness*, *Job 29. 2, 3.* There is Hope even in this Case, therefore why cast down? for, 1. Thy Father's learning thee to lean to himself, and letting thee see a Necessity for it, from a Discovery of thy own Weakness, and of his Sufficiency and Fulness; O what art thou, or what can thou do when God is away? 2. Hope says, thou knows a better of it, time has been when thy Feet were as *Hinds feet*, thou did run in the way of God's Command when he did enlarge thy Soul, *he is a God that changes not*, therefore endure. 3. There are yet some remains, tho' ready to die, tho' thou has little Strength, yet he keeps some Desires in Life with thee, *despise not the Day of small things*, the little that remains

remains says there is hope. 4. These toilsome Tosses among the Depths will make Way for thy ascending the Hill of God, he will bring thee out of the horrible Pit and miry Clay, and set thy feet on a Rock, and establish thy goings, and put a new song in thy Mouth, even Praise unto our God.

Secondly, If thou complain, I am chastened with sore external Afflictions that have born me long and sore down, how will I endure? *Hope still*, for, 1. These come not to thee in the common Road, but are the out-making of Love Purposes, *Psal. 89. 32, 33.* 2. They are necessary Preparatories to usher in your Mercies, ye had lost your Comforts, if ye had not gone through the Furnace to enjoy them. 3. They are Summonds to make ready for Eternity, this is not your resting Place, this keeps Life in Hope, and Hope makes not ashamed, but causes to endure. 4. They shall all work for good, and contribute to hand down the Crown on your Head as more than a Conqueror at last, *Rom. 8. 28.*

Thirdly, If thou complain, My Tossings are yet sadder, I am chastened with a Burden of Sin, Iniquities prevail against me, *Psal. 65. 3.* how will I endure? *Answer first*, Not by yielding and suffering Sins to triumph and reign, but positively by resisting to the Blood, and there is still Ground of Hope, for, 1. Thou art more humbled by a View of thy lothsome Case by Sin made to cry out, *Behold I am vile.* 2. This makes thee value pardoning Mercy more than a thousand Worlds, *Micah 7. 18.* Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the Transgression of the remnant of his Heritage, he retaineth not his Anger for ever, because he delights in Mercy. *Psal. 65. 3.* Iniquities prevail against me, as for our Transgressions thou shalt purge them away. 3. There is a counter Principle in thee that will not yield, The Spirit lusting against the Flesh. 4. It is promised you will be at last victorious, The Lord hath delivered your Soul from Death, he will deliver your feet from falling, as for your Transgressions, he will purge them away.

Fourthly, If you say, The Lord fights against me as an Enemy, I reckoned till the Morning, that as a Lion, so will he break all my Bones, from Day even to Night will he make an end of me, *Isa. 38. 13.* *Yet hope still*; for, 1. Our blessed Lord Christ hath born the great Blow of God's Wrath in your Name, otherways ye had sunk long ere now, all ye meet with are but as Flea-bites. 2. God's Frowns to his People are but of short Continuance, *Isa. 54. 8.* In a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee for a Moment, but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. He chastens but as a Father for Correction and Instruction.

Fifthly, If thou complain, The Devil is emptying his Quiver against me, how will I endure? *Answer*, Cast not away thy Confidence, endure still, there is Hope; for, 1. This says and proclaims thee to be Christ's Souldier, fighting in his Camp, this is no small Matter of Encouragement and Comfort. 2. More are they who are with thee, than they who are against thee; God in all his Attributes and Perfections, his Angels, his Providences and Promises are for thy Protection and Encouragement. 3. Thou will attain more Skill to fence off Satan's Thrusts, and repell his Insinuations in time coming. 4. Christ himself hath born the burnt of the Battel already, there remains no more for his Souldiers, but stand still and behold the Salvation of the Lord.

The Improvement of this Doctrine I give in one Use, Make ready for Chastnings, that so ye may endure them, never more Faults among Christ's Bairns, so we have great Reason to expect a Scourge. If you ask, How shall I be ready to endure? *Answer first*, Be much in the Exercise of Christian Patience and quiet Waiting on God for Support and Comfort, beware of fretting, grudging and repining. 2. Keep in Record his Jewels

Jewels and Love-tokens, and bring them forth in a Strait, and bind him by his own Tokens, it cannot be that he whose these are will be a Terror to thee in the evil Day.
 3. Labour to keep in good Terms with God and your own Conscience, that all may be quiet within, that Conscience may not lash you when God scourges, and the World persecutes you: 4. Treasure up the sweet Promises your Faith used to feed upon, *Psalm 119. 50.* these are better than Gold and Silver: 5. Provide your spiritual Armour and get it on, it is compleat for all your Parts, providing ye keep still your Face to the Storm, but if ye turn your Back, you are gone. O sirs, think on this, your chastening Days be a coming, and much of your Knavery will then be discovered: Be prepared then to endure, that Grace may be so exercised, as to prove that *God deals with you as Sons whom he chastens in Love.*

HEBREWS XII. Verse 8.

But if ye be without Chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye Bastards and not Sons.

THE Conclusion the Apostle hath laid down concerning Chastisements as a necessary and inseparable Adjunct of the Relation betwixt Father and Sons is so certain in Nature and Grace, that to the Inference he hath already made from it to the Evidence of Sonship, he adds here another no less to his Purpose, namely, That these who have no Chastisements, are not Sons, but Bastards.

In the Text consider, *First*, A State supposed of being without Chastisement, if Chastisements be taken for every thing that is grievous and afflictive, no Man is absolutely without it, tho' comparatively some may be freer than others, *Psalm 73. 4, 5.* *There are no bands in their Death, but their Strength is firm, they are not in Trouble as other Men, neither are they Plagued as other Men,* and this is given as a Character of the worst Men in the World. But the Chastisement in this Text and Context is instructive Correction, as hath been before shewed, and this many Professors of Religion may want altogether, and whatever Trouble they meet with, if not of this Nature, they may be Bastards, it doth not evidence their Sonship.

Secondly, We have the Substance of the Conclusion or Rule the Apostle lays down, *Whereof all are partakers*, which must be restricted to Sons; it is in vain to look for spiritual Sonship without Chastisement, Christ and all his Members receive some Share of it. *Col. 1. 24.*

Thirdly, The Apostle draws his Inference from this, *Then are ye Bastards and not Sons:* If he had said only, *then are ye Bastards*, it would not have been so evident they were not Sons, for Bastards are Sons, but they are not such Sons as have Right to the paternal Inheritance; Gifts and Riches may be bestowed upon them by their Parents, but they have no Right to the Inheritance by their Sonship. From the Text,

Observe:

Observe 1. That People may have many Trials and Afflictions, and yet none of them fruits of God's Love. The great Question is, if they be such fatherly Chastisements, as bring Instruction and Correction with them, to these who are exercised thereby.

Observe 2. That all the Partakers of the Adoption of Sons are likewise in less or more Measure Partakers of fatherly Chastisements.

Observe 3. That there are many even of Professors under the Gospel, who have no Right to the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, they are Bastards, such as may have common Gifts and external Enjoyments, but they are not Heirs.

I return to Observe 1. That People may have many Afflictions, and yet none of them fatherly Chastisements, bringing Instruction and Correction with them, to these exercised thereby.

To prepare this Note for our Use, I shall, First, Prove the truth of it: 2ly, Shew the Danger of these in whom it is verified.

First, The Truth of this Doctrine may be evident, 1. Because many People are afflicted, yet have not their Afflictions as subject Matter of their present Soul-Exercise: They look upon them as coming by Chance, or as the Product of second Causes, but see not the Lord's Hand lifted up for their Correction and Instruction. 2. Many are more obdurate and hardened under God's afflicting Hand, as Pharaoh and Pilate, the former by the Plague of his Heart, the latter by Dreams. 3. Some are inclined to reflect and grudge more, saying, *This evil is of the Lord, why wait we on the Lord any longer?* 4. Many have Trials and Afflictions, who, if put to it, cannot condescend on any Fruit of Love produced by their Trials on their Souls: Their Chastisement is not followed with Amendment, Repentance, Self-searching, and Lamenting, Striking on their thigh, saying, *What have I done?*

Secondly, I am to shew that your Danger, to whom Affliction is not Sanctified, is great; For 1. It speaks out a State of Estrangement from God, *Such are without Christ, aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.* 2. God is about to give up with you, and forsake you altogether, *Isa. 1. 4, 5. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more.* 3. Your Afflictions are of the same Nature with Hell Torments, arising from pure vindictive Wrath, the Punishment of your Iniquity is a Sopp of the Brim of that red Cup without Mixture, which, in its Dregs shall never go from your Head to all Eternity.

Use First, Then put it to Trial what kind of Afflictions yours are, if they be Sanctified and Fruits of God's Love; Then 1. They cast up the Filth and Dregs of Sin to you, and make you loath and abhor it, saying, *What have I to do any more with idols, Hosea 14. 8.* 2. They make you weary of Time, and Things of Time, and cry, *O that I had wings as a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest.* 3. Sanctified Trials will be highly valued, and every new Fruit of them will raise a Song of Praise, *Psal. 119. 71.* 4. They chase you nearer to God, and make the Soul pant for Communion with him, *Psal. 56. 3. What time I am afraid I will trust in thee.* 5. They free the Soul from a carnal Set, and Earthly Disposition, and make Things of Eternity bulk most in the Eye.

Use Second, of Conviction, To these whose Afflictions are not Fatherly Chastisements. Your Danger I have already told, they are the First-Born of Hell to you, and this is evident, 1. Because they make you more Secure, rather than Up-*set* you to Duty; the

more Trials, the more are you Proof against them. Tho' you roar as an Ox or an Ass beat by its Master, yet ye never perceive the procuring Cause. 3. Tho' your Furnace be hot, yet God is not in all your Thoughts. 4. All your Afflictions never put you to one Hour's serious Communing with your own Soul, to find how Matters stand betwixt God and you, to try if ye be reconciled to God through Christ.

Use Third, Of Exhortation. Endeavour so to behave under Rods as to find them Love-Chastisements from the Lord to you; If it be asked, How shall I do this? *Answer,* 1. Whenever God strikes, turn ye in, and search out, *wherefore he contends*: Discover the Sin, turn it out of Doors, and humble thy Soul in the Sense of it. 2. View also the Aggravations of thy Sin, against how much Light and Love, how many Resolutions and Vows thou hast broke, and how boldly thou has gone on it. 3. Take a broad Look of Sin, in the Glass of God's holy Law, and there see its exceeding Sinfulness. *When the command came, sin revived and Paul died*; Sin by the Command becomes exceeding sinful. 4. Let it not be so much thy Care to get the Affliction off, as to be Justified from the Guilt, and Sanctified from the Pollution that brought it on.

Observe second, *That all such as are Partakers of the Adoption of Sons, are more or less Partakers of Love-Chastisements*: The Text says, *Whereof all are Partakers*. And the sixth and seventh Verses, *That he scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth, and what Son is he whom the Father chasteneth not*.

It is true, Sense will never be able to acquiesce in God's Dispensations, but God's People are little obliged to Sense, when it sets up as Umpire and Judge; For, whatever falls out beyond its Comprehension, it will speedily conclude, God is an Enemy to me, *As a lion he will break all my bones*: But tho' God's Way seem mysterious, yet Divine Love hath a notable Way to resolve it in favours of Believers, but the graceless World tastes not of these Dainties: And so I pass to

Observe third, *That there are many, even among Professors under the Gospel, who have no Right to the Eternal Inheritance*. Bastards may get Gifts, but they cannot be Heirs.

To prepare this Doctrine for your Use, I shall Enquire, *First*, Who are to be reckoned Bastards and not Sons? *Secondly*, Prove that they have no Title to the Inheritance: So that if they pretend any Hope, it is the Height of daring Presumption.

And *First*, We may reckon Bastards of two sorts; 1. Some who carry their Mark in their Fore-heads, contained in these black Rolls, *Ephes. 4. 5. Rev. 21. 8. Chap. 22. 15. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Rom. 1. 21. to 32.* as the unclean lustful Sensualist, the covetous Wretch, the Drunkard, *Isa. 5. 11, 12, 22.* the Liar, the Swearer, the Scoffer at Religion; If ye be among these Ranks, how dare ye reckon your selves Heirs of the Inheritance? *How canst thou say I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done, Jer. 2. 23.* Some it is like will bless themselves they are not spoiled with these grosser Evils mentioned, therefore all is well. But I must tell you, there is

A second sort of Bastards, who carry their Marks in their Hands, and under a Mask and Cover of Profession deceive themselves, and others, passing for good Christians, *Math. 7. 22, 23.* Many will say, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity. There be many secret Evils by which Men go down by Troops among the Bastards to the chambers of death; As

Hebrews XII. Verse 8.

131

1. Gross Ignorance, how many does this kill in the dark? *Hos. 4. 6. Isa. 27. 11.*
 2. *Thess. 1. 8. The Lord shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God.* 3. Secret Reserves in dealing with Christ, which make all null, when ye reserve some Latitude for some Sin or secret Idol to rule in the Soul, or to turn with the Tide in time of Persecution, *Luke 14. 26, 29, 38.* 3. Formality in Religious Duties, performing them only because of Custom and Education, but from no real Delight in them, this hardens and deludes Men, *Matth. 23. 14.* 4. False Ends in holy Duties, seeking your own Commendation and Applause, not the Glory of God, and Enjoyment of him, *Hos. 10. 1. Israel is an empty vine, bringeth forth fruit to himself.* 5. Trusting in your own Righteousness, in your own Privileges and Performances, and putting them in Christ's Room; this is a Soul-destroying Sin, *Rom. 9. 31, 32. Rom. 10. 3.* 6. A secret Enmity at the Strictness of Religion, tho' punctual in your formal Devotion, yet you hate precise Walking, the Life and Power of Religion, *Paul* before his Conversion was concerning the righteousness of the law blameless, *Phil. 3. 6.* yet breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, *Acts 9. 1.* 7. Predominant Love to the World, *Mark 10. 24, 27. 1 John 2. 15.* How close lurks this under a Covert of Religion, *Luke 8. 14. Cares and riches and pleasures of this life choke the Word, that it brings no fruit unto perfection.* 8. Reigning Malice against these who are injurious to you, that your State is already good, and therefore ye become secure, *Rev. 3. 17. Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable.* The foolish Virgins lay in their Beds, when they should have been at the Markets of Grace buying Oyl, and never perceived their Want, till Christ came and the Doors were shut, *Matth. 25. 5.* — 10. Now, I obtest Conscience in every Bosom here, if thou find any of these Marks speak home and pronounce that Soul unclean: Speak not Peace to him to whom God says, No Peace.

Secondly, I am to prove, that such Bastards have no Title to the Inheritance, so that if they pretend any Hope, it is the Height of daring Presumption.

And First, It is evident from Christ who hath purchased, and hath the Dispensing of the Inheritance in his own Hand, he cannot bestow it on such, 1. Because it were against his Trust, he is bounded by his Instructions from his Father, within which your names are not contained. 2. It were against his Word, will ye make Christ Judge whether ye shall get the Inheritance or no? then see it decided against you, *Matth. 18. 3. Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Luke 13. 3. — except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* 3. It were against his Oath, he hath lift up his Hand to Heaven and sworn ye shall never enter the Inheritance, *Psal. 95. 11.* 4. It is against his Honour, to be thought a Favourer of Sin, *2 Tim. 2. 19. — Let everyone that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity. 1 John 3. 3. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Secondly, It is evident from Bastards themselves, that they cannot get the Inheritance. For 1. They are carnal, sold under Sin, they receive not the things of the Spirit of God, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* Husks serve them to feed upon. 2. They are Satan's Drudges and Slaves, taken captive by him at his Will, *2 Tim. 2. 26.* and it is not reasonable, that these who do the Devil's work, should sit at Christ's Table. 3. The Guilt of all their Sins lies like a Mountain upon them, they are not absolved from the Curse of the Law, it stands like a flaming Sword to guard them from entering Paradise. 4. The Gospel as well as the

Law binds the Sentence of eternal Damnation upon them, *The Lord rears from mount Zion*, Joel 3. 16. and utters that terrible Voice, *He that believeth not shall be damned*, Mark 16. 16.

Thirdly, It is evident that such Bastards cannot enjoy the Inheritance, because God himself is set against them, *Ezek. 5. 8. Nebum 2. 13. his Face is against thee. Psal. 34. 16. He will cut thee off from the Earth, and destroy thee. Ezek. 14. 8. His Attributes are against thee, his Justice as a flaming Sword to sheath in thy Bowels, Deut. 32. 40, 41. His Wisdom hath ordained its Arrows, and prepared the instruments of Death against thee, Psal. 7. 12, 13. His Holiness is full of Antipathy at thy Wickedness, Psal. 5. 4, 5. His Power mounted against thee for thy Destruction, 2 Thess. 1. 8. and his Truth is sworn against thee, Psal. 95. 11. if he be True and Faithful, thou must perish, and not enjoy the Inheritance. Now lay these together, and let Conscience speak, if thou thinks it possible for such Bastards as thou art to be Heirs, or have any Hope of getting the Inheritance? Oh no, but on the contrair, all the Attributes of the infinite and terrible God are bound against thee. Therefore take,*

First, An Use of Direction, If ye ask, What shall I do to be among the Sons, and out of this black Roll of Bastards? For Answer, Make Conscience to reduce these following Directions to Practice, *First*, Believe and be perswaded, *That except ye be born again, ye shall never be Sons, nor enter the Inheritance.* 2. Get a lively through feeling and awaking Sense of your Sins, till ye be weary, *heavy loadned* and sick with them, that so ye may have Work to put in Christ's Hand. 3. Be affected with thy Misery by Sin, when thou lies down, for any thing thou knows thou may awake in Hell, O dangerous, to stand tottering on the Brink of the bottomless Pit! O study thy Misery, till thy Heart cry out for Christ, as earnestly as ever a drowning Man cryed for a Boat. 4. Settle on thy Heart that thou art under an absolute Inability ever to recover thy self, thy praying, reading, hearing, or communicating will never satisfy the Justice of God, nor save thee from Wrath, *There is none other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we must be saved, but the Name of Jesus*, Acts 4. 12. 5. Quickly renounce all thy Sins, if thou yield thy self to the Practice of any one Sin, thou art undone, *Rom. 6. 16. if thou quite thy Sins, God will give thee his Christ, and is not this a profitable Exchange, thus thou shalt be a joint Heir with Christ*, Rom. 8. 17. 6. Make a solemn Choice of God for thy Portion, *Deut. 26. 17, 18. Thou hast avouched the Lord this Day to be thy God, and to walk in his Ways, and to keep his Statutes, and his Commandments, and his Judgments, and to hearken to his Voice: And the Lord hath avouched thee this Day to be his peculiar People. Josh. 24. 22. Ye are Witnesses against your selves, that ye have choson the Lord, to serve him; and they said, We are Witnesses.* If thou make this Choice, I will tell thee good News, *God will establish his Covenant for an everlasting Covenant to be a God unto thee.* All his Attributes shall be thine, his Wisdom to Direct, his Power to Protect, his Patience to Spare, his Goodness to Pity thee; the blessed Persons of the Trinity shall be thine, a supream, absolute, sovereign Lord, a Saviour, a Sanctifier to thee. 7. Accept of the Lord Jesus Christ in all his Offices, as a Prophet to teach thee, as a Priest who hath obeyed the Law, and satisfied the Justice of God by his Death in thy Room and Place, as the Contrivance of infinite Wisdom to save thee from Sin, from the Curse of the Law, and the Wrath of God, and who is ready and willing by his Intercession to apply all his Purchase to thee: And accept of him as a King to subdue thy Lusts and Idols, and to Reign in thy Heart by Grace, *Isa. 45. 22, 24. Phil. 3. 8, 9. John 1. 12.* 8. Resign up all the Faculties of thy Soul, and Members of thy Body to God, and to his Service; thy

Under-

Hebrews XII. Verse 9, 10.

133

Understanding to be enlightened by him, thy Will to be subject to his Commands, thy Conscience that it may challenge thee for Sin and impartially judge of thy Actions, thy Affections, that they may be set in the right Channel, as Wings to carry thy Soul to Heaven; thy Tongue, that it may speak for him, thy Hands act, thy Feet run in his Ways, that thou may be at God's Disposal, willing to bear his Cross, as well as enjoy his Crown, *Rom. 12. 1. 2 Cor. 8. 5. Isa. 44. 5.* 9. Let all this be compleated by a solemn Covenant betwixt God and thy Soul, retire from the Noise of the World, and having spent some time in Humiliation and Prayer, solemnly swear and subscribe these blessed Terms of the Covenant of Grace, *Psal. 119. 106. Neh. 9. 38. Jer. 50. 4, 5. Ezek. 16. 8.* Use second of Exhortation, Obey and put in Practice these preceeding Directions, that ye may be imbolded among the Sons of God, and not secluded from the Inheritance as Bastards: Consider, *First*, God himself invites you, *Rev. 22. 17. And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is a thirst, come: And whosoever will, let him take the water of Life freely.* He assures you of Welcome, *John 6. 34. Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* 2ly, The Doors of Mercy are not yet shut, so long as they are open go in and take Possession, for the Door may be shut if you continue to resist his Call, and the Master will say, *I know you not*, *Matth. 25. 10, 11, 12.* 3ly, Every Refusal is as a Sword piercing Christ's Heart, it puts him to weep over you, *Luke 19. 41.* 4ly, If ye be impotent, he offers his Grace to enable you, *Isa. 40. 29. He giveth Power to the faint, and to them that have no Might he increaseth Strength.* 5ly, Since he offers to purge you, how terrible will the Effect of your Refusal be, *Ezek. 24. 13. Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.* Therefore embrace the blessed Jesus, that ye may be his Sons, and may not perish among the Bastards. *I call Heaven and Earth to witness against you this Day, that I set Life and Death before you: I can but warn you of your Misery, I cannot compell you to be Happy. The Lord himself do it, to him be Praise.*

H E B R E W S XII. Verse 9, 10.

Furthermore, we have had Fathers of our Flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them Reverence: shall we not much rather be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live:

Verf. 10. For they verily for a few Days chastened us after their own Pleasure; but he for our Profit, that we might be Partakers of his Holiness.

THese Words contain a new Argument proponed to evidence the Equity of the Duty exhorted to; namely, *Patient enduring* divine Chastisements, as appears from the Introduction *Erra, Furthermore, or Moreover.* The former Argument was taken from the Duty of Parents, this is taken from the Duty of Children. The Topick whence he argues is a Mixture of Principles and Experience. The Principles are of two sorts, *First*, From the *Light of Nature*, namely,

quintly, That Children ought to submit to their Parents in all things. 2ly, From the *Logic of Order*, that there is the same Relation betwixt God and Believers, as is betwixt natural Parents and their Children. The manner of the Argument is from a Comparison, wherein he proceeds from the lesser to the greater; if so in the one Case, how much rather in the other.

In the Comparison we have, *First*, A Supposition of some Matters of Fact. 2ly, An Assertion built thereupon proving our Duty.

The Parts of the Supposition are, *First*, *We had Fathers of our Flesh*, that is, these by whom we derive our Flesh by ordinary Generation. 2ly, *These Fathers chastised us*, as they had Right to do, so they made use of the Rod as well as the Word for our Nurture. 3ly, *The Rule whereby they proceeded*, *After their own Pleasure*, according to their best Discretion, it is intended for the Example of good Parents, who should use Prudence as to the Cause and Measure of Chastisement, and not do it arbitrarily or passionately, as some may, without reaching the End, which is the Child's Good. 4ly, *The Continuance of this Chastisement*, it is for a few Days, namely the Days of Childhood and Youth. 5ly, *Their Subjection to the Chastisement*, *We gave them Obedience*; the Word imports a turning of Bowels and Spirits within them toward their Fathers, with an ingenuous modest Shame, opposite to Stubbornness and Forwardness, we did not desert the Family of our Parents, nor grow weary of their Discipline, so as to be discouraged from our Duty.

Next follows the Apostles Assertion or Conclusion drawn from the lesser to the greater, seeing our Fathers of the Flesh chastised us, and we submitted to them, *much more should we be in subjection to the Father of Spirits*. For, 1. He who now chastises us is the Father of our Spirits; they were but Fathers of our Flesh, but God of our Spirits. By Spirit understand the rational Soul immediately created or infused by God; this is a chief Reason why we should be subject to God in all our Chastisements, our very Souls are his, and may he not do what he will with his own? *Shall the Possessed contend with his Maker?* This Text hath been tossed in the Debate concerning the Origin of the Soul betwixt *Origen*, *Augustine* and *Jerom*, but we have given the true Meaning of it. 2. The great End and Design of God's Chastisements is our Good, which he can infallibly accomplish, if this were believed, it would take off all Disputes in this Case. 3. His special End in chastising is, that he may make us partakers of his Holiness. This consisteth in mortifying our Corruption, in the gradual Renovation of our Natures, and sanctifying our Souls, by implanting the Graces of the Spirit of God in them, and thereby preparing them for Glory; And since next to the partaking of Christ by the Imputation of his Righteousness to us, it is the greatest Privilege and Honour we can in this Life receive; and therefore there is no Reason to weary of his Chastisements. 4. Therefore it is most reasonable we be in Subjection to God, as to the Father of Spirits, that we resign our selves to his Will, and quietly acquiesce in his Right to dispose of us as he pleaseth. 5. The blessed Consequent of this is, we shall Live, tho' they tend to the Destruction of the Flesh, yet by these Chastisements Encrease of spiritual Life in this World, and eternal Life in Glory is designed. From this Text,

Observe 1. That it is the Duty of Parents to chastise their Children if need be; for he that spares the Rod hates the Child, but train up a Child in the way wherein he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Observe 2. That there is Discretion and Prudence necessary in Parents chastising their Children.

Observe 3. That when Children are thus chastised, it is their Duty to submit.

Observe

Hebrews XII. Verse 9; 10.

1351

Observe 4th, That by this we should be convinced of the Equity and Justice of God in Chastising us, and of the Necessity of our Submission.

Observe 5th, That God's being our Lord, Creator especially of our Spirits or Souls, proclaiming his absolute Sovereignty over and Propriety in us, and so requires our cheerful Submission to all his Dispensations.

Observe 6th, That the native Consequence of this Submission to God under Chastisements, is that we shall live; Tho in their own Nature they seem to tend to Death, yet they are designed to Life, for the Increase of Spiritual Life in this World, 2 Cor. 4. 16. Tho our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day, and to Eternal Life in the World to come, If ye through the Spirit mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live, Rom. 8. 13.

Observe 7th, That God's great and general End in all his Chastisements of his own People is their Good and Advantage. For our Profit.

Observe 8th, That God's special and particular End in them, is to make his People Share-ers of his Holiness. And this contains three Notes;

First, That no Man can understand the Benefit of Divine Chastisements, who is not acquainted with the Excellency and Dignity of God's Holiness. No Man can find any Good in a bitter Potion, who understands not the Benefit of Health.

Secondly, That if under Chastisements we find not an Increase of Holiness in some special Degrees, it is a Sign they are much lost to us. We have nothing but the Trouble and Sorrow of them.

Thirdly, That there can be no greater Testimony of Divine Love in afflicting Chastisements, than that God designs by them to make us Partakers of his Holiness, to bring us nearer to him, and make us more like him. I return to

Observe 1st, That it is the Duty of Parents to Chastise their Children, if need be. The Truth of this Doctrine appears, 1. From Parents Relation to, and Interest in their Children; they are bone of their bone, they are a Transcript of themselves. 2. By Generation Parents transmit a Body of Sin in their very first Conception in the Womb, tho they be begot Heirs to an Estate, yet they are born Heirs of Hell, and this Body of Sin grows up in their natural Bodies, and is ready, especially in Youth, to exert it self, if not curbed when the Effects thereof break out; Youthful Lusts must be under-ly watched over by Parents, and guarded against; Youthful Lusts must be under-Correcting, their Souls be ruined, Their blood will God require at your hand: Remember what Eli met with for this Neglect, 1 Samuel Chap. 2d. 4. Ye can betray no greater Hatred against poor Children, than to neglect correcting of them for seen Evils, Prov. 13. 24. He that spareth his rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes: It is remarkable, that who through excessive Indulgence, and foolish fond Affection dote on their Children in younger Years, and do not curb them, do usually have them be their greatest Crosses in older Years, and spend many Tears in vain for neglecting what cannot be retrieved.

Observe 2d, There is Discretion and Prudence required in Parents Chastising their Children.

It is impossible all Circumstances can be particularly condescended upon, it must be referred to Parents Wisdom. Only, 1. Ye would be serious in Warning and Instructing Children what are these Evils and Youthful Lusts they are in Danger of, and set before them the Ill of these, as of Lying, Neglecting Reading, and Prayer, Waiting on Schools, Fighting, Quarrelling, Swearing, and the like. 2. When ye find them guilty of

of these or the like Evils, ye are not surprisingly to see upon them in Passion; but being come to the Age of Correction, *First*, Lay out the Ground of their present Guilt, and convince them of it. And *Next*, Apply Correction: 3. Back Correction with serious Prayer to God for the Blessing to the Means, in order to their being Reclaimed. 4. Suit your selves to the various Constitutions of your Children, some are more Tender and Delicate, a Frown or passing Rebuke will more reach them, than a hundred Strokes; others are more Harsh in their Temper, that their Folly cannot be beat out without the Rod; the former are worse, the latter better by it.

Observe 3d, *That when Children are thus Chastised by their Parents, it is their bound Duty kindly to Submit:*

Reasons of the Doctrine. *First*, God commands, *Children obey your parents*, Eph. 6. 1. 2. *That ye obey them in all things is well-pleasing to God*, Colos. 3. 20. 3. *If ye do otherwise, ye list your selves among these that are rejected of God*, 2 Tim. 3. 2. 4. *Fearful are the Threatnings of the Lord against such as are disobedient*, Prov. 30. 17. *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.*

Observe 4th, *That by this we should be convinced of the Equity and Justice of God in his Chastising us, and the Necessary of our Submission to him in all our Afflictions.* But I have already spoke to the Substance of this Note, and I therefore pass to

Observe 5th, *That God's being our Lord, Creator especially of our Spirits or Souls, proclaims his absolute Sovereignty over, and Propriety in us, and requires our cheerful Submission to all his Dispensations: Shall we not much rather be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits? Now, when it is said, our Souls owe themselves so intirely to him, it implies all other things belonging to us, namely our Bodies, Children, Estates, Health, Name and Accommodation: We are called cheerfully to submit the Disposal of them all to him, for all are his, he is the Father and Owner of All.*

To prepare this Note for our Use, I shall *First* Prove the Truth of it. *Secondly*, Enquire how God's absolute Sovereignty over us and Propriety in us, gives him Power to dispose of us, and all we have, and requires our Submission? *Thirdly*, What are the Properties of this his Right to us?

And *First*, The Truth of this Doctrine, that God hath an absolute Sovereignty over us as Father of our Spirits, and sole Propriety in us and all we have, appears, 1. From the Text, by an Argument from the less to the greater, if Fathers have Power over their Children, much more hath the Lord our Creator and absolute Sovereign, Ezek. 18. 4. *All souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son. All the Faculties and Actings of the Soul are at his Disposal.* 2. If he be absolute Sovereign over our Souls, much more over our Bodies, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *Glorifie God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his. They usurped God's Property, who said, Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us? Psal. 12. 4.* 3. If he be Father of our Spirits, then is he also of our Childrens, the *Israelites* might sell them when they were not otherways able to pay their Debt, or could not sustain them, Exod. 21. 7. The antient Laws of the *Romans* allowed both to sell and put them to Death, without being questioned for it: Much more may the Lord dispose of them as he pleaseth, who is absolute Sovereign over them, and hath undoubted Propriety in them, Ezek. 16. 20, 21. *Acts* 17. 25, 28. 4. If of our Children and nearest Relations, much more of our Estates, Possessions, and Honours, *Lev. 25. 23. The land is mine: Since it is his, he may dispose of it as he will.* 5. By the Lord's subduing the Spirits of Men, effectually calling and converting whom he will

will. To humble a proud and lofty Spirit, to soften and melt an obdurate Heart, to reconcile a bloody Rebel, to quicken a Soul dead in Sin, to change the inward Disposition of one habituate in Sin, and Enmity against God, proclaiming the Greatness of God's Power and Sovereignty, and by the same Power he keeps Possession of the converted Soul, in spite of all the Opposition an evil Heart from within, an active Devil, and a bawle World can make against it. 6. Another Evidence of his Sovereignty is his Over-ruling the Designs of Men, to bring his own Counsels to pass, tho' they seem very opposite thereto. The Design of building the Tower of Babel, to keep that rebellious Multitude together, proved to their utter Dispersion, Gen. Chap. 11. Jacob's dissembling and abuse of his Father's Infirmary, proved a Mean to obtain the Blessing, Gen. Chap. 27. To prevent Joseph's Dreams, his Brethren sell him into Egypt, and by this Mean the Lord keeps them alive, and performs that Honour to Joseph which by his Dreams was foretold, Gen. Chap. 37. Chap. 41. Chap. 42. Chap. 43. Chap. 44. Chap. 45. Paul the Apostle's Imprisonment proved the Furtherance of the Gospel, Phil. 1. 14. 7. The Lord's People in all Ages own his absolute Sovereignty over their Spirits. Eli says, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 2. 18. David says, *Here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him*, 2 Sam. 14. 26. Abraham titles the Lord, *The most high God, possessor of heaven and earth*, Gen. 14. 22. Other Acknowledgements see, Job 9. 15. Prov. 16. 4. Rom. 4. 11. Isa. 64. 8. Ephes. 1. 11. Isa. 40. 17. Dan. 4. 22.

Secondly, I proposed to enquire upon what Ground doth God's Sovereignty over us and ours give him Right to dispose of us, and requires our Submission? To this I Answer, The Ground of the Claim in the Text is his Creation of all, Psal. 80. 11. *The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine; as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.* Verse 12. *The north and the south thou hast created them.* Psal. 93. 5. *The sea is his, he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.* This his Right to us and all that is ours by Creation, is evident more particularly, 1. *He made us all for himself, he was set on work by none to make any of us for another but only for himself*, Prov. 16. 2. *Each*. 1. 15, 16, 17. 2. *He gave us a Being out of nothing, there was no Pre-existent Matter, but what himself had made of nothing, a Potter, the Form is his own, but the Matter is anothers.* 3. *He framed us all without the Help or Concurrence of another, none assisted him, nor did Co-operate with him*, Isa. 44. 24. *He stretcheth forth the heavens alone and spreads the earth by himself.* 4. *He upholds all in the same manner as he created it, of himself without any other Support*, Coloss. 1. 16, 17. *He*. 1. 2, 3.

Thirdly, I am to shew what are the Properties of this his Right to us? And 1. It is Independent and Undetived, whatever Right any other hath, it comes from him, his is only the Primary and Original Right. 2. It is Absolute, Unlimited, without Conditions either as to time of Enjoying, or Way of Disposing. 3. He hath sole Title to us, none run Sharers with him. 4. He hath the perpetual Right, it can never be Transferred, Diminished, nor Extinct, he must be greater than the Almighty can wrest it out of his Hand.

Use 1. This Doctrine informs us, First, How great is that God who is the Father of Spirits, whose we are and whom we serve, we and ours and all we are and live are his by an Irreversible Right. 2d, Hence it naturally follows, that he may dispose of us and ours as he pleaseth, do with us what he will, he can do us no wrong. May he not do with his own as he will? 3d, This vindicates the Justice of God in his Proceedings with Men, which our partial Reasonings be ready to call in Question. As 1. That he hath Right to pass by some and choose others, to leave some to Misery, and appoint others

others to Heaven and Happiness; are not all his own? He is Father of us all, *Rom. 8. 15. 16.* *What have I loved, and what have I hated. What shall we say then? If there are any mercies, God is merciful, for he is full of mercy, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.* 2. That he may vouchsafe the Light of his Gospel to some and not to others, *Math. 11. 25. I thank thee, O father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.* 3. That he may deny his Grace to some, and give it to others, it is his own, he may give it or deny it to whom he pleases, *1 Cor. 1. 27. 28.* *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath abused the strong things of the world, to confound the strong; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

4. It informs us of the Freness of his Love to all that are the Objects of it, in all the Acts and Expressions thereof. If our God could not love most freely, he would love nothing at all but himself, for there is no Motive, no Cause in the Creature. For 1. We are all most Worthless, of no Value, any thing that is good or fit to be loved is his, *James 1. 17.* Were we stripped of all that is not our, we should have nothing at all. All our own Stock is Poverty, Misery, Blindness and Nakedness, *Rev. 3. 17.* which is far from making us Objects of God's Love. 2. How far are we then from deserving his Love, there are three Conditions of deserving, and this Doctrine discovers them to be utterly impossible to be found in us, *First*, If we deserve any thing, it must be by Virtue of that we owe not, but no such thing we have, for we owe all to the Lord. 2. It must be by Virtue of that which is our own, but we have nothing. 3. It must be by being advantageous to another, but what Advantage hath God by us? *Job 35. 7. If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?*

Use 2. Of Exhortation, To God's Sovereignty over us, and Propriety in us, absolute, then let this oblige us to some great Soul-concerning Duties: As,

First, Thankfulness to him of whom we are and to whom we owe our selves and all things we enjoy. This he will have to be his Peoples Exercise, both on Earth, and in Heaven; whatever we have that is good, is from him, each Degree of it is from him, if it be better with us than with others, it is from him: Therefore let the Praise of all abound to God, the Author and Giver of all.

Secondly, Make a solemn Surrender and Resignation of your selves to his absolute Disposal; This Doctrine shews how great Reason there is for it. If it be asked, How shall I be helped to do this? Answer *First*, Be persuaded of his absolute Right to you; If ye enforce the Impression of this by frequent Thoughts on your Hearts, it will 2. Bring your Will to consent, that he dispose and use you as his own, this is our Covenant with God, *Ezek. 16. 8. I entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.* And if ye give not Consent to this Article, ye can have no Right to the Covenant of Grace. 3. Allow him to take Possession in your Heart and Affections as his own, the chief owner should have the chief Room, *Psal. 139. 12. P/d. 93. 25.* Ye must be willing to be disposed of by him as his own, to be used by him as his own, *Your bodies and spirits are his, 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.* Ye are chosen Vessels for his Use, *Ad. 9. 15.* Ye must lay out your selves for God in your whole Life, under a continual Sense, that ye are not your own but his. Therefore Surrender your selves to him, 1. Absolutely, without Reserves or conditional Clauses, this were, in Place of giving up our selves to him, to rob him of the Glory of his absolute Dominion. 2. *Phil. 2. 13.* that

others may have an Affection, but in Submission to him, as Intimely, without Exception, to deny any thing to him, is to deny him all, for he is the total Owner of all, all the Senses Powers of Will, Conscience, Mind, and Affections; and Inferior of Fancy, Appetite, and Sense, the whole Body with all its Parts: should be resigned to him, to be disposed of and used as he pleases, in Perpetual and Inevocably, without any Resistance, till the Lord come at the great Day, and find us so doing.

A third Duty this Doctrine binds us to, is, To have Patience in continual Exercise under his Disposal of us and ours. As 1. Under Wants and Necessities, when we have not what we would have, the Lord's absolute Sovereign Power should make us Silent and Submissive. In Letter, consider what it is what we lose, and who hath taken it from us. *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away.* 2. When Trouble and Afflictions are many, and our suffering, and of long Continuance. O then what need of Patience! This Doctrine will help to it. Hath he not Right to do with his own as he pleases? He cannot wrong us. Why then should we repine, Shall we receive good with the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? Job 2. 10.

Fourth Duty is, Be humble, we have nothing of our own. What then is this Fond for Pride and high Thoughts of our selves? *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 1. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 2. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 3. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 4. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 5. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 6. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 7. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 8. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 9. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 10. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 11. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 12. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 13. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 14. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 15. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 16. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 17. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 18. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 19. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 20. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 21. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 22. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 23. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 24. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 25. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 26. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 27. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 28. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 29. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 30. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 31. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 32. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 33. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 34. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 35. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 36. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 37. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 38. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 39. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 40. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 41. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 42. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 43. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 44. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 45. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 46. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 47. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 48. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 49. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 50. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 51. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 52. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 53. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 54. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 55. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 56. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 57. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 58. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 59. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 60. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 61. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 62. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 63. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 64. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 65. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 66. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 67. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 68. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 69. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 70. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 71. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 72. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 73. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 74. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 75. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 76. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 77. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 78. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 79. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 80. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 81. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 82. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 83. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 84. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 85. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 86. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 87. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 88. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 89. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 90. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 91. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 92. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 93. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 94. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 95. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 96. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 97. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 98. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 99. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.* 100. *For we are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered.*

First, This Doctrine obliges us to the Duty of self-denial. We are as a cloud that is blown away, as a flower that is withered. Therefore we should be denied of what is not our own, but thought for ourselves. As 1. Our Judgments, he that is not his own Master, must not follow his own Judgment, but submit to his Preceptor, by acknowledging his Commands concerning all things to be right. 2. As to our Wills, who is not his own Master must not take his own will, but his whole he is: we must have no Will of our own but seek it in his. 3. As to our Ends, if wholly the Lords, we must wholly and only design his Glory whole we are, as our great End: If we deny not our selves in this, we deny his Title to, and Interest in us. 4. As to our Interests, that which is God's must be ours and that only, if we own him for our God, and Father of our Spirits: Otherwise we will be Traitors and not Faithful to our Lord. 5. As to our Business and Employments, who is not his own, must not do his own Work: As Christ was always in his Father's Work, so should we imitate him in this: If we do Satan's Work, we declare that he and not God has Interest in us. 6. As to our Enjoyments, we should be denied to them so far as to look on them not to be ours but his: Could we compass all that is in the large Grasp of our worldly Designs, yet never a whit the richer, for nothing is ours but God's.

Observe 6. That the native Consequence of this Submission to God under Chastisements, is That we shall live: Tho' in their own Nature they seem to tend to Death, yet they are designed to Life: Namely, the Increase of Spiritual Life in this, and of Eternal Life in the World to come, 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17.

To prepare this Doctrine for your Use, I shall enquire, What this Life is? And First, It is a Life of Justification, whereby the Soul lives in Favour with God, and is reconciled

from the Council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name.

Use 1. of Exhortation, Endeavour Submission to God's Chastisements, that so ye may attain to this Life, for this eminently influenceth it. I would Press this from two general Considerations; First, This Life will free you from many Evils ye will be exposed to under Trials. Secondly, This Life will bring many rich Advantages to your Souls.

First, Consider, this Life will free you from many Evils ye are exposed to under Trials, as, First, From heartless Despondency and Fainting, which is most hurtful, being an Evidence of Weakness and Want of Faith, Prov. 24. 10. If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. This hath many dangerous Consequences, but this Life of Grace will keep up the Head under the Waters of Adversity; there is Access to lay your Head in Christ's Bosom, and suck Comfort from him. Heaven is secured, and the Crown enforced, so that there can be no Loss but Gain, be the Losses and Pressures long continued. It is ready to bring on this, even on the best of Saints, as on David, Psal. 31. 10. My Life is spent with Grief, and my Tears with Sighing, my Strength failed because of mine Iniquity, and my Bow is consumed; but when the Lord makes this Life of Grace to shine, O Lord, I said, thou art my God. Psal. 14. O how great is thy Grace for which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee. Blessed be the Lord, for he hath stored us his marvellous loving Kindness in a strong City, and so he triumphs to the End of the Psalm. 32, This Spiritual Life delivers the Soul from all disquieting and distracting Thoughts and Cares about the Events of chattering Trials, which do quite discompose and hurry a Man to unlawful Means of Outrage. But this Life of Grace prompts Believers to rest their Hearts on the Lord, and leave it there, and not to be anxious about the Matter, but only careful about Duty, and helps them to reason with the Psalmist, Psal. 43. 5. Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my Countenance, and my God. 44, Spiritual Life frees the Soul from the fear of Man that consists in Shame, Prov. 29. 24. People speak of honoring David, he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. 35, From Plagues of Stupidity, Senselessness and carnal Security under Pressures and Trials, this Life of Grace is an active thing, and makes the Soul quick, active and agile for God, and is an Enemy to Laziness in spiritual Duties. 36, From a quarrelling, fretting, grudging Disposition against God, from Atheism like Pharaoh, saying, Who is the Lord, that I should obey him, Exod. 5. 2. But this Life of Grace makes the Believer speak as Eli, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. 3. 18. I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned.

Secondly, Consider the rich Advantages this spiritual Life will bring with it, as, First, This will keep the Soul within sight of God, and of Duty in a time of Affliction, Psal. 16. 7, 8. I bless the Lord, who hath given me Counsel, my Reins also instruct me in the night Seasons; I have set the Lord always before me. Psal. 36. 9. In thy Light we see Light. Ye may answer all Temptations as Joseph, How can I do this, great Wickedness and Sin against God, Gen. 39. 10. 24, This will keep Believers in a calm equal composed Frame under Pressures, when Satan changes Weapons upon them and opposes them as a roaring Lion, 1 Pet. 5. 8. 34, It fills the Soul with Care and Solitude in Duty,

Duty, Psal. 76. 9. What shall I say, I will wait in hope. Psal. 116. 17. *As for me, I will call on God, and the Lord shall save me.* 4y, It keeps the Soul's Face toward God, how dismal forever the Trial be. *Psal. 142. 3, 4, 5. Jonah 2. 1—4. Jonah prayed to the Lord his God out of the fishes belly, then I said, I am cast out of thy sight, yet will I look again toward thy holy temple.* 5y, It puts the Soul in a humble waiting Posture, he believes, and faith will make haste, he waits upon the Lord till he have mercy, as the eyes of servants look to the hands of their masters, *Psal. 123. 2.* 6y, It keeps the Soul in a watchful Frame, looking out on all Hands, lest they be Circumvented or Deceived.

Uss. 2d. Of Consolation and Reproof, to such who are altogether Strangers to this Spiritual Life, tho they have been under Variety of Trials. If it be asked, What is the Occasion of this? *Answer First, A Decay of Love and Zeal to and for God and his Interests, when People are put to it by public Sufferings; If thus be wanting, they turn Luke-travel like Justice.* 2y, A Decay of the necessary Duty of Mortification, being crucified to the world, and having the world crucified to us, its Pleasures, Ease, and Delights, are great Troubles to the Grace of Christ. 3y, A Decay of Faith, when it cannot view the glorious Perfections of God, and the Reward provided for the Overcomers, this robs of this sweet and noble Life. 4y, The Impressions of the Truth and Dreadfulness of the Threatnings are worn off their Spirits, and therefore they are not afraid of declining in a Day of Trial.

Uss. 3d. For Trial, If there be any such Fruit and Product of sanctified Chastisements in your Case; Are ye made to live the Life of Justification, Sanctification, Peace, and Comfort? First, Try if ye be made to live the Life of Justification, 1. By somethings preparatory to it. 2. By some Fruits of it.

*First, Hath thy Chastisements throughed a Work of Conviction? If this be done, the Spirit of God hath discovered Sin in its Nature, in its dreadful Consequences, and particular Aggravations; and particularly convinced thee of the Sin of Unbelief, John 16. 8. of thy gross Sin, of Heart-Idols, and traced these impure Streams to the Fountain of Original Guilt, Psal. 51. 4. The Spirit hath also discovered the Truth and Goodness of the Promises offered to us in the Gospel; that there is Pardon with God that he may be feared, Psal. 130. 4. That there is a Fulness in Christ to supply all thy Wants, answer all thy Necessities, and heal all thy Diseases. 2y, The Heart which before acted as Satan's Champion and principal Agent is subdued; So as 1. It is obliged to lay down all Weapons of Hostility against God, as that blessed Blow that Paul got, that threw him from his stately Galloper to the Ground, and made him cry, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts 9. 6. Hells Armour he wore is stricken off, and he made to forsake his wicked Ways and Thoughts, and turn to the Lord. 2. The Man's turned out of all Confidence in himself, *for revives and he dies, Rom. 7. 9. He cries, I was as a beast before thee, Psal. 73. 22. He is off his own Bottom, depending on Christ alone for righteousness, counting all things loss and dung, to be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness of Christ by faith, Phil. 3. 8, 9. 3. The Heart is subdued to a reverend Esteem of, and Affection to God, and the Means of Grace, he esteems all his commands concerning all things to be right: Now, there is a serious Enquiry after the Way of Salvation begot in the Soul, Acts 2. 37. *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* 4. The Soul being settled, composed, and in earnest, hath an abiding Solicitude, how to be in Hand with the great Prize of the Gospel, *Luke 15. 17, 18. when the prodigal Son came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger, I will arise now, and go to my father.* 5. The**

5. The Soul acquiesceth on the Terms proposed, on which Christ and Grace is to be had and secured, *Acts 16. 30. Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* That is, What will I need do to gain Christ? 6. He is brought to a humble Confession of, and Conviction for Heart-sins against God, which now seem to be out of measure sinful, *I have sinned* (says the Prodigal) *against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son,* Luke 15. 18, 19. 7. The Heart opens to God in Prayer, to long after him, *with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered,* and also diligently to attend on the Word of Eternal Life, *I will hear what God the Lord will speak,* Psal. 84. 8. 8. The Heart is established and fixed on Christ, so as to rely on him and the Merits and Purchase of his Death alone for Pardon. This is that Act which doth justify, which is called, *Believing on him,* receiving of him, coming to him, and to this the Promise of Pardon is made; The Soul grasps to this, and looks greedily to Christ for Salvation, *1/a. 45. 22.*

Secondly, From this justifying Faith flow some notable Fruits; As 1. Peace of Conscience, which took hold of the Sinner as an armed Man, and bred a terrible Storm, but now, *being justified by faith, we have peace with God,* Rom. 5. 1. 2. Boldness and access to God, Rom. 5. 2. Ephes. 3. 12. 3. Joy in the holy Ghost, *having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts,* Rom. 5. 5. *Rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory,* 1 Pet. 1. 8.

A second Life to be tried, is that of Sanctification; But we may have Occasion to speak of this from what follows, namely, the special End of Chastisements, to make us partakers of his holiness. Therefore I pass it now, and come

To the Third, The Life of Consolation, which is the native Product of submitting to Chastisements, 1 Pet. 1. 6. *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.* These work this Life, 1. By preparing Matter of Joy and Comfort to us. 2. By applying that Matter of Joy to our Souls.

And First, There is a three-fold Matter of Joy results from Sanctified Chastisements, which the Lord prepares for us to Feed upon, and comfort our selves by; 1. They chase us to the Rock, Christ, to Fellowship and Communion with him, in which all Comfort is wrapped up, we have Communion with the Father, the God of all Consolation, 2 Cor. 1. 5. with the Son, our Spirit may rejoice in God our Saviour, Luke 1. 47. who is the consolation of Israel, Luke 2. 25. and with the holy Ghost, whose peculiar Title is, The Comforter, John 14. 26. and when he visits us, *our hearts shall rejoice,* John 16. 22. 2. They send us to Fellowship with the Means of Grace, that there we may rejoice, Psal. 89. 15, 16. *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: —* Psal. 119. 111. *Thy testimonies are the rejoicing of my heart. Verse 162. I rejoice at thy word, as one that finds great spoil.* 3. They produce the Testimony of a good Conscience, approving our selves to God, which is Matter of great Joy. The Sun-Shine of God's Favour shines not on the Dung-hill, but on the Garden of Spices, Rom. 14. 17. *The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost.* 2 Cor. 1. 12. *Our rejoicing is this, The testimony of our conscience.*

Secondly, Sanctified and patiently endured Chastisements apply this Joy to our Souls; 1. By reviving high Thoughts of God, remembering what he is, and has done under Chastisements, suiting their present Circumstances, *Jonah 2. 7. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord,* this kept up his Life of Joy: Whereas, when a Man forgets the Lord his Maker, he will be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass, *Isa. 51. 12, 13.* But when we meditate on the Lord, we may say, Our

Our Calamities from Sinners is deliver us, *Dan. 3. 17.* 2. By keeping the Soul close in daily Applications to God's Throne, sanctified Trials incline the Soul to Prayer, *Isa. 26. 16.* and this is the solid way to Comfort, *Psal. 103. 3.* Let the Heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord, seeking God's Pardon, and the Pardon of Sin is a daily Pond for Joy. 3. Waiting on the Lord under these Chastisements brings continual rejoicing, *Isa. 23. 4.* *Let this is our God, we have waited on him, and he will save us, this is the Lord, we have waited for him, he will be glad and repeat in his Salvation.* 4. By making us highly value and prize the Comforts of God's Spirit, *Psalm 111. 11.* *Are the Comforts of God small and trifling?* These may counterpoise all our Discouragements, is it a right thing to have God for your Father, and Christ for your elder Brother, may not this bid a Defence to all Linking Fears? If it be further asked, How may I know if my Comforts be of the right Kind? Answer 1. If they be genuine, they are founded upon the Evidence of your Covenant-right to Christ, *2 Sam. 23. 5.* 2. They have been gained by serious Wrestling and Prayer, the Saints mentioned in Scripture gained their Comforts by this Method, *Psal. 42. 13, 2, 3.* *Psal. 119. 3, 4, 5, 6.* 3. They are attended with some notable Effects, as, 1. They make your Soul more humble, *Isa. 38. 14.* *What shall I say? he hath laid his hand upon me, and himself hath done it, I shall go softly all my Years in the bitterness of my Soul.* 2. Your Soul is more enflamed with Love to God the gracious Giver, *Psal. 116. 1: Luke 22. 32.* 3. Ye will be much taken up in commending his matchless Goodness, *Isa. 38. 19.* *Psal. 34. 1, 2, 3, 4.* 4. Ye will make more use of precious Christ by the serious Exercise of Faith, *John 20. 27.*

Observe 7. God's great and general End in all the Trials, Persecutions and Chastisements of his Church and People, is their Good and Advantage; It is for our Profit, says the Text. At such a time many are ready to conclude utter Ruin to the Church and People of God, little considering that God is hereby bringing about their Welfare. Paul says, *I fill up that which is behind of the Sufferings of Christ in my Flesh, for his Bodies sake, which is the Church, she now rejoice in my Sufferings for you, Col. 1. 24.* *Whether we be afflicted, it is for your Consolation and Salvation, 2 Cor. 1. 6.* *The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.*

The Church in general reaps the following Advantages by the Chastisements of her Members, 1. Their Trials on the account of Truth serve to strengthen and establish the rest of the People of God in the Faith, for the Truth is thereby confirmed, and made to have deeper Impression on their Hearts when it is sealed by Sufferings and Death of Martyrs, as well as by their Doctrine and holy Life; therefore Paul rejoiceth in his Sufferings for the *Colossians*, Chap. 1. 23, 24. 2. By this Mean the Gospel is diffused and spread abroad, *Phil. 1. 12, 13.* *Acts 8. 4.* Paul's Prison was the Mean of making his Preaching famous at Rome, and bringing Christianity to Nero's Court. When Saul made Havock of the Church, he by that Storm dispersed the Christians, who like so many Grains of Corn scattered in a Field produced the greater Harvest; the more the *Israelites* were oppressed, the more they multiplied, *Exod. 1. 20.* The Jews crucified our Saviour to diminish the Number of his Followers, but by this Means they increased. When the Dragons Fury did most swell, the Woman brought forth the Man Child, *Revel. 12. 4, 5.* When the Learning of Philosophers, the Witchcraft of Hereticks, the Power of Emperors, and the Strength of the whole World was bended against the Christians, then they did most increase. 3. This engageth the Lord the more to appear and do for his Church, to own her, and counterwork the Devil's Plots against her, when he sees his People suffer cheerfully. In the Primitive Persecutions there were few

few Hypocrites in the Church when Christ's Fan is in his Hand, the Wind and Heat of Persecution drives away the Chaff, but the Wheat abides, and is driven nearer God.

4. By this Means others are made bold and zealous for God and his Interests, *Phil. 1. 14.*

Many of the Brethren in the Lord making confident by my Bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without Fear.

When some rejoiced at the Stake, and in Flames, this made others cry out, *No, James Christians, we are Christians.*

5. Hereby a noble Precedent is laid down for others in a time of Trial, they see the Cloud of Witnesses, that have gone through the Flood before them, *James 4. 10.*

Take my Brethren the Prophets who have spoken in the Name of the Lord, for an Example of suffering Afflictions, and of

Patience.

Use 1. Beware of concluding all is gone, when ye see Christ's eminent Servants and

People put to sad Trials and Sufferings: We know not the Thoughts of the Lord, what he is designing, and minds to effectuate thereby.

Use 2. Let us search our selves, if we as particular Members of the Church be reaping

Advantage by what we hear and see of the Churches Afflictions and Trials; 1. Is the Truth of the Gospel more riveted on our Hearts, and we more rooted in the Faith and

Assurance thereof? 2. Are our Resolutions more fixed to adhere thereto, is Truth more lovely and desirable on that Account. 3. Is Grace growing more within, and the

Spices flowing out, and giving a goodly Smell? 4. Are your Hearts more loosed from the World, and ready to quite all for Christ and his Cause? 5. Are these News raising

you out of your Bed of Security, and making you prepare for the Battel? This says, *Meat is come out of the Eater, and out of the Strong Sweetness.*

Use 3. Of Consolation to such whose Lot this shall be to be put to it by sore

Sufferings, be of good Cheer, all shall be for thy Profit, they shall work together for Good.

Observe 8. God's Special and particular End in all his Peoples Chastisements, is to make them

Partakers of his Holiness. Now this general Proposition in order to its being cleared,

resolves it self in these three Branches.

First, That no Man can understand the Benefit of Divine Chastisements, who is not acquainted

with the Excellency and Dignity of Holiness.

Secondly, That if under Chastisements we find not an Increase of Holiness in some special

Degrees, it is a Sign they are much lost to us, we have nothing but the Trouble and Sorrow of

them.

Thirdly, That there can be no greater Testimony of Divine Love in Chastisements and

Afflictions than this, that God designs by them to make his People Partakers of his Holiness, to

bring them nearer to him, and make them more like him. I begin with the first.

Observe, No Man can understand the Benefit of Divine Chastisements, who is not acquainted

with the Excellency and Dignity of Holiness. No Man can find any Good in a bitter Potion,

who understands not the Benefit of Health.

For opening this Doctrine, I shall, 1. Enquire wherein appears the Excellency of

Holiness. 2. How comes it that no Man can understand the Benefit of Divine Chastisements, who is not acquainted with this.

First, I shall enquire wherein appears the Excellency and Dignity of Holiness? Answer

first, Holiness is the Glory and Honour of the Creature, therefore the Apostle links

Sanctification and Honour inseparably together, *1 Thess. 4. 4.* and in *Deut. 26. 18.* The

Lord hath avouched thee this Day to be his peculiar People, — to make thee high above all

Nations which he hath made, in Praise, and in Name, and in Honour, and this thou mayest be

an

an holy People unto the Lord thy God. It is only Holiness makes the righteous more Excellent than his Neighbour. God's Holiness is his Glory, *Exod. 15. 11.* Much more must it be so to Man. Holy *Theodosius* protested, *He would much rather be a Saint and no King, than a King and no Saint.* He preferred the Title of a Member of the Church, to Head of the Empire; and *Lamber* had rather be *Christianus Rusticus*, than *Ebrius Alexander*, rather a Christian Clown, than a Pagan Emperor. These Heroes well knew, that Holiness was the Top of all Honour and Glory.

Secondly, Holiness is of such a Perfume, as the Saviour thereof suffuseth it self, and is most pleasing and delightful to all that come near it, *2 Kings 4. 39.* *The Shunammite* said unto her husband, *Behold now I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall, — and it shall be when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.* That which did grace and ingratiate these holy Converts mentioned *Acts 2. 46, 47.* into the Favour of all the People, was the Exercise of their Grace and Holiness. A holy Conversation is gaining, *1 Pet. 3. 1.* It is reported, that *Cicilia*, a poor Virgin, by her holy Deportment at her Martyrdom, was the Means of converting four hundred to Christ. *Justin Martyr* confesses, that it was the Constancy and Piety of Christians in their Sufferings, that converted him to Christianity, nothing pleases the Eye, nor wins the Heart, as Holiness: What is Gold to Godliness? Gifts to Grace? Parts to Piety? The Holiness of *Ambrose* engaged the Heart of *Theodosius* the Emperor to him, and the Holiness of *Paphnutius* the Heart of *Constantine* the Great.

3ly, Holiness is the Excellency of all a Mans other Excellencies, as it is the Crown and Glory of all the Divine Perfections: The Angels who know well what is the Top of his Excellency, do evidence this by a three-fold Repetition, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Isa. 6. 3.* These multiplied Acclamations denote the superlative Eminency, Excellency and Perfection of God's Holiness. Birth and Breeding, Wit and Wealth, Honour and Learning, be but Shadows of true Nobleness and Excellency: It is Holiness that is the Soul and Substance of all. *Naaman* was General of the King's Army, *2 Kings 5. 1.* He was a great Man and Honourable, but he was a Leper, this was a Cloud on all his Glory: So to say, there is a Wise Man but Unholy, a Great Man but Unholy, What a Cloud is this on all other Excellencies? But let Holiness be added to these, and they shall shine as so many Suns: This made *Jerom* say, *He had rather have Paul's course Coat with his Heavenly Graces, than the Robes of Kings, their Diadems and Kingdoms.*

Fourthly, That Holiness is so Excellent, is evident, because it is an Honour to the Persons and Places to which such a Man as is endued with it stands related: The Holiness of the Father, is an Ornament to the Child, so was *Abraham* to *Isaac*, and the Child to the Father, as *Isaac* to *Abraham*; So is the Wife to the Husband, *Prov. 12. 4.* *A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband, a sweet well tempered Wife is as a Gold Ring on his Finger, a Wife endued with Gifts as a Gold Chain about his Neck, but a Holy, and a Vertuous Woman as a Crown on his Head.* Yea, such are an Honour to the Place they were bred and born in, *Psal. 87. 5, 6.* *It of Zion shall be said, This and that man was born there.* God loves the very Ground they tread upon.

Fifthly, Holiness is the very Badge and Livery of the believing Company, *Isa. 63. 8.* *Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Servant.* *v. 18.* *The people of thy holiness.* *Ier. 2. 3.* *Holiness to the Lord is God's Mark set upon them.*

Sixthly, Holiness is a common Blessing, not only the Person having it, but all that are about them fare the better for their Sake; all in the Family, Court, City, or Country;

Country; All in *Laban's* Familie fared the better for *Jacob's* sake, and all in the City of *Zoar* for *Lea's*, and all in *Pharaoh's* Court and Countrey of *Egypt* for *Joseph's* sake. Holy *Elijah* was the Chariot and Horsemen of *Israel*. Holy Persons are publick Blessings, *Job* 22. 30. He shall deliver the Island of the Innocent, and it is delivered by the Purity of his Hands. *Isa.* 6. 13. The holy Seed shall be the Substance thereof; That is, The Stay and Prop of the Land. *Prov.* 10. 25. The Righteous is an everlasting Foundation. The Foundation of the World would soon shatter and fall a pieces, were it not for their sakes.

Seventhly, The Excellency of Holiness appears from its Antiquity, the first Suit ever clothed the Back of Man's Nature was Holiness, being created after the image of God in holiness: Sin is of a later Edition than Holiness, Sin is but an Upstart, but Holiness is the First-born, *Jer.* 6. 16. Ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls.

Eighthly, Of all things Holiness will render the Soul most Beautiful and Amiable; as it is the Beauty and Glory of God and of Angels, so of a Christian too: *Psal.* 92. 5. Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever. *Psal.* 29. 2. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Ninthly, Its Excellency appears from its Gainfulness, the Study of Holiness is a most thriving Trade, *1 Tim.* 6. 6. Godliness is great gain. *Chap.* 4. 8. Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. *Prov.* 22. 4. By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honour, and life. Holiness hath the Promise of Gold as well as Grace, of Honour as well as Heaven. Profit is a Bait that all bite at, it is the great God of the World, but here is a Profit infinitely beyond the World. For,

First, Holiness brings in present Gain, What Gain to present Gain? Many lay out much, and venture far, and run the Hazard of all, and yet it is long ere they see any Return: But Holiness brings present Profit, *Rom.* 6. 22. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruits unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. *Psal.* 19. 11. In keeping thy statutes there is a great reward. Holiness is its own Reward, O what blest Sights! Sweet Tastes! Glorious Incomes from Heaven hath the holy Soul!

Secondly, As it brings present Gain, so it brings the best and greatest Gain; For, 1. It makes a Man Rich in the midst of Poverty, *Rev.* 2. 9. What hast thou lost Man? Wife, Children, Riches, well, but hast thou Holiness? Thou art Rich: This is thy principal Stock, which Trials and Troubles can never rob thee of, *Gen.* 33. 9, 11. 2. By Holiness you will gain a good Report, a good Name, *Heb.* 11. 39. These all having obtained a good report through faith. Holiness raises a Man's Fame in the World, *Acts* 6. 3, 5. *Psal.* 112. 6. The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. 3. God's holy People shall gain an Hiding-place, a Shelter and Refuge in a Day of Storm and Tempest, *Prov.* 11. 6. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them; Let a holy Man's Dangers, Snarcs, Enemies, be never so many, his Holiness shall be a Shelter to him, *Prov.* 12. 6. Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way. It keeps with that Care and Vigilancy as a Man would keep the Apple of his Eye, which is the tenderest Piece of the most tender Part, *Isa.* 33. 15, 16. *Exa.* 14. 14, 20. 4. Holiness will keep you from Death in Pangs of Death, *Prov.* 11. 4. Riches profit not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivereth from death. The greatest and richest Treasures cannot ward off a Discale, it is not a Crown of Gold can cure the Head-ach, nor the Golden Scepter the Palsy-hand, nor the Honourable Garter the Tooth-ach, nor the Purple Robe chase away the Burning Fever.

Fever: no more can great Treasures help in a Day of Death, but Holiness will, *Prov. 11. 28. In the way of righteousness is life, and in the paths thereof there is no death*: In the Original there is *Life*, there is *Life Natural, Spiritual and Eternal*, to be had in this Way. 5. By Holiness ye may have the greatest Boldness in the Day of Judgment, *1 John 4. 17.* It will make thy Face to shine, because, as he is, so are ye *holy as he is holy*. It is not Wealth, Power, or Policy, will then avail, only Holiness, a well tried Faith (which is but one Branch of Holiness) shall be found to praise, honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, *1 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7.* This will be the only shining and radiant Robe on that Day.

Secondly, I am to enquire how it appears that no Man can understand the Benefit of divine Chastisements, who is not acquainted with the Excellency of Holiness? *Answer*, This is evident 1. Because the Man who understands not this, he is a wicked one whom God hates, *Psal. 5. 4, 5; Psal. 11. 5.* He is a natural man who receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* His carnal Mind is Enmity against God, *Rom. 8. 7.* 2. Such are ready to reflect on God's afflicting Providences, *Nah. 3. 13. Their words are stout against the Lord*: Yea, they come to that height of *Atheism*, as to deny Providence, *Zeph. 1. 12.* 3. The Benefit of Divine Chastisements consists in mortifying and purging away Sin, in Up-stirring to Prayer and other Christian Duties, in quickning the Soul in the Exercise of Faith, Patience, Humility, Self-denial, Desire for Heaven, and other Graces; which a Person unacquainted with the Excellency of Holiness, values no more than Swine esteem rich Pearls.

Observe 2d. *If under Chastisements there be not an Encrease of Holiness in some special Degrees in us, it is a Sign they are much lost; We have nothing but the Trouble and Sorrow of them.*

To prepare this Note for your Use, I shall enquire, *First*, How Chastisements encrease Holiness? *Secondly*, Wherein consists this Encrease of Holiness?

First, Chastisements encrease Holiness by disclosing the Mystery of Sin, and thereby raising Souls Aversion from, and Hatred of it, this makes it good for them they were afflicted. 2. By opening to the Soul the Necessity of applying to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, this raised a Cry in Job's Bosom, *Chap. 40. 4, 5. Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.* 3. Sanctified Chastisements give Sinners a View of the Wrath and Displeasure of God Glorious in Holiness, who will by no means clear the guilty, as being in Contradiction to his holy and pure Nature, and therefore, in order to Conformity with him, it puts the Soul on the Study of Holiness. 4. By casting up the inward Sink of Corruption in the Nature of Man, without the Knowledge of which, the Study of Holiness neither appears Necessary nor Excellent.

Secondly, Wherein consists this Encrease of Holiness? *Answer*, It evidenteth it self, 1. By keeping your selves free of gross Enormities, one of these is enough to cloud all your Graces and Spiritual Excellencies, one Spot on the Face spoils all its Beauty, David's one Act of Filthiness with Bathsheba, was a great Blur upon that holy Man: When one commended Alexander the Great for his many noble Acts, another objected, *But he killed Calisthenes*; this clouded all his great Actions. 2. By your Cordial Thankfulness for so rare a Jewel, one Drop, one Ray of it, is more worth than all Honours and Estates on Earth; Wilt thou be thankful to that God who made thee a Man, and not because he made thee a Saint? For being a Creature, and yet not for being made a

new Creature? What is thy Health, Wealth, or Wit, to Holiness? Holiness is a Mercy, a sweetening Mercy, that puts a Beauty on all thy Mercies, without this they are but bitter as the Waters of Marah. [a] An Heathen [a] Diogenes gave Thanks for three Things, *This God had made him a Man and not a Beast, A Man and not a Woman, A Greek and not a Barbarian.* But how far greater Ground has thou for these Divine and Supernatural Principles of Holiness? 3. By your constant Pursuit after Holiness, *Phil. 3. 14.* This Progress is compared to building, to running a Race, to Entrance of the Morning Light. Tho' the Devil, the World, and the Flesh cry, *There is a Day in the way,* yet ye must march forward. It is said of *Hannibal*, that notwithstanding of the rough Rocks and craggy Clefts of the *Alps*, yet he proceeded on his Design for *Italy*, with this Resolution, *That he would either find a Way or make a Way.* 4. By resolute standing up for the Purity of Religion in its Worship and Ordinances, in Opposition to all Mixtures and Corruptions whatsoever, there is nothing exasperates a holy God more than this, God can bear with Defilements any where rather than in his Worship. Because 1. Mixtures in Worship are cross to God's express Commands, and who art thou, O Man dare run cross to these? 2. It is to impeach his Wisdom by accusing the best Scripture of Insufficiency, to supply its supposed Defects by their Inventions, therefore the Lord commands to follow for our only Guide, his Law and Testimony, *Isa. 8. 20.* 3. These make God's Worship a vain Worship, as mixing Water with Wine debases the Wine, or mixing Tin with Silver, or Copper with Gold debases the Metal. Therefore the Lord gives that awful Certification, *Rev. 22. 18, 19.* 5y, By Lamenting and Bewailing the Loss of Holiness, this Crown is much fallen from our Head this Day, O the Witherings, Decays and Back-sets in Holiness, even among the Godly Remnant in our Day! Tears instead of Gems and Pearls, were the Ornaments of *David's* Bed, when he was fallen from his Holiness, *Psal. 51. and 6.* 6y, By pressing after higher Degrees of Holiness, *2 Cor. 7. 1.* *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

Now, Passing the third Observe, *That there can be no greater Testimony of Divine Love in Chastising and Afflictions, than this, That God designs by them to make his People Partakers of his Holiness.* For, having spoke to this in Substance upon the sixth and seventh Verses, and now having discovered the Excellency of Holiness, which abundantly proves the Doctrine;

I come to apply the Whole, *First*, By proposing a few Motives to press you to perfect Holiness in the fear of the Lord. 2y, By giving some Means and Directions to help you to it. 3y, Putting it to the Trial, if ye have attained such a Perfection of Holiness, as we are all to strive for. 4y, Reproving unholy Persons.

First, Some Motives to press you to perfect Holiness; Consider *First*, That notwithstanding the Means and Advantages ye had to perfect it, ye have but yet obtained very small Measures of it, ye are but Babes not Men in it. Shrubs not Cedars in Holiness. And this will be evident from these Particulars, which are as so many Motives, 1. From the Strength, Power, Activity and Prevalency of Sin in you to this Day, witnessing to your Faces the small Measures of Holiness ye have attained to; O Sins! are not Corruptions in many as powerful as they were ten, twenty, or thirty Years ago, notwithstanding the Prayers ye made, the Sermons ye heard, the Tears ye have shed, the Vows ye have taken on, and Conflicts ye have had against it. 2. The high Price ye put upon the

the Toys and Trifles of a present World; how did the Disciples dispute after dispute, which of them should be the greatest? But where Holiness has got the ascendant, Men will make their very Crowns Footstools for Christ, to sit up and ride in Triumph on; the Glory and Bravery of this World set but Dross and Dung to them. 3. A third Witness of this, are your Fears and Faintings in a Day of Adversity, tho' there be as many fear not as there are Fears in a Day of Adversity in Scripture, yet how oft do your Fears get above your Faith? *Prov. 24. 10. If thou faint in the Day of Adversity, thy strength is small.* 4. Witness your ease, ready and frequent Fallings before Temptations, and Motions to Sin, when Temptation but touches it, ye are so soon ye are tempted but conquered; O then Holiness, must be at a very low Ebb in your Souls; Whereas Men eminent in Holiness have been eminent in resisting Temptation, as Joseph, Daniel, Job, the three Children, and others. When one of the Martyrs was offered Honours and Riches to recant and disown his Religion, he said, *Do but offer me what is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and when I see what I'll say to you, but these Things are not worthy my Answer.* When *Nabon* offered large Preferments to *Balaam*, he answered, *Offer these Toys to Children, not to Christians.* 5. Witness in your strange Behaviour when God limits you in some near and dear Enjoyments, if he but frown on your Joseph, touch your Isaac, call for your Benjamin, then with Rachel, ye will refuse to be comforted, or with Jacob, will go weeping to the Grave, or with David concerning Absalom, *Would to God I had died for thee*, or with Jonah of his Gourd, tell God ye do well to be angry. Now ye cannot look up and trust in God, and lie down with Solace in the Arms of his good Pleasure. O no, God has slain your *Fish-bone*, and ye can neither Eat, Drink nor Sleep, but cry out, *Behold and see, is there any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow*, *Lam. 1. 12. 18.* 6. Witness the ebbings and flowings of your Spirits according to the workings of second Causes, as these are, so are ye up or down: Now full of Hopes, presently full of Fears; now stedfast, anon wavering, *Jer. 8. 2. Chap. 46. 11. Chap. 51. 8.* But if ye were eminent in Holiness, ye would say with *Azaz*, *2 Chron. 14. 11. Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no Power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee.* And with *Elisha*, *2 Kings 6. 16. Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.* 7. Witness the Soul-leanness, Barrenness and Unfruitfulness among us this Day, *Isa. 24. 16. — But I said, My leanness, my leanness, was upon me.* God hath waited more than three Years for Fruit, yet behold nothing but Leaves; I read of an *Indian* Fig-tree that its Leaves are as broad as a Target, but its Fruit no bigger than a Bean; ah how many Christians this Day answer that Emblem. 8. Witness that great Indifferency to be found among you, many professed Christians indifferent whom, or what they hear, whether they do Duty, attend Ordinances or not; all this makes it too, too evident ye have attained small Measures of Holiness.

Motive 2. To provoke you to higher Degrees of Holiness, consider, that it is possible for you to attain them beyond what ye have yet reached; tho' the Work be hard, yet it is possible, as appears, 1. From many precious Promises made for your Encouragement, *Job 17. 9. The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.* *Psal. 84. 7. They go from strength to strength.* *Prov. 4. 18. The path of the just is as the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day.* *Psal. 92. 12, 13, 14. Hos. 14. 5, 6, 7.* 2. The Prayers put up on that Account, *Phil. 1. 9, 10, 11. Heb. 13. 20, 21.* make it evident, that greater Degrees of Holiness are attainable, otherways the People of God approved in Scripture would not have prayed for

for them. 3. The Experience of others saith, that in all Ages there have been Babes, Children, young Men and old Men in Christ's School, 1 John 2. 12, 13, 14. some are called Trees of Righteousness, Plants of Renown, Cantab. Psal. 92. 12. Others are bruised Reeds, Isa. 42. 2. Some are burning and shining Lights, others are as smoking Flaxes, John 1. 8. Isa. 42. 2. Some are as Goats before the Ark, Jer. 50. 8. others in Christ's Sheepfold, are but tender as Lambs, and these with young, Isa. 40. 11. Some are strong, many for advancing in Holiness, doth evidenced greater Degrees in it are attainable, Paul blest the Lord since he heard of the Colossians Faith in Christ Jesus, and Love to all the Saints, Col. 1. 4. that the Corinthians come behind in no Gift, 1 Cor. 1. 7. 5. For this End the Lord hath bestowed excellent and rare Gifts upon many of his Servants in the Ministry, that they may advance the Growth and Increase of Holiness in your Hearts, Eph. 4. 8, 11, 12, 13. they are given to bring you to a perfect Man, to the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ. Since more Degrees of Holiness may be had, should ye not press for it? You grasp at more Riches, Honour, Ease and Applause, which are but fading and uncertain Shadows; ought ye not to press for more Holiness that is infinitely more Excellent than all things in the World? And that the Scripture hath assured you, may be got and enjoyed with Peace and Comfort.

Motive 3. The more Holy ye are, the more ye will be God's Delight, the more dear to, and beloved of him by his Love of Complacency, Dan. 9. 23. *Thou art greatly beloved;* for, 1. The more Holy, the more Excellent, Corruptions are Diminutions of Excellency, as Dross mixed with Silver, but the purer the Gold is, the more excellent and glorious. 2. The more Holy, the more ye please the Lord, Growth in Holiness fills Heaven with Joy, and the more God is pleased with a Man, the more he delights in him and loves him. 3. The more Holy, the more like to God, and so more beloved by him, for it is his Likeness both in Nature and Grace that draws out the strongest affections of Love. 4. The more Holy, the more Communion and Fellowship with God, Dent. 34. 10. 5. The more Holy, the more ripe for Heaven, tho' less Degrees of Grace puts a Man into an habitual Preparedness for it; yet it is only an Eminency and Excellency in Grace and Holiness that puts him into an actual Preparedness for Heaven.

Motive 4. The more your Holiness is increased, the more the great God will be glorified thereby, John 15. 8. Others will cry, behold God keeps a noble House! his Tables are richly covered, his Cups overflowing, he feeds, yea, feasts his Servants with choicest Rarities and Varieties that Heaven affords, that makes them so thrive in Holiness.

Fifthly, The more Holiness thou has, the more will God give thee, Psal. 84. 11. *The Lord will give Grace and Glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;* he will still be adding more Grace till it be ripe for Glory, Math. 13. 12. *Whoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.* John 15. 2. *Every Branch that beareth Fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more Fruit.*

Sixthly, The greater will your Joy and Comfort be in this World, it is only Growth and Eminency in Holiness will make a Man walk to Heaven comfortably, Psal. 16. 11. *In thy Presence is fulness of Joy.* Divine Joy ebbs and flows as Holiness doth, Soul comforts rise and fall with Holiness, here a Man may read and see most of the Love of God, at which the Babe of Grace will leap cheerfully in his Soul, who walk in the fear of the Lord, walk in the Comfort of the Holy Ghost, Acts 9. 31.

Motive

10thly The more Holiness ye have, the more will God reveal of himself, his Mind and Will to you; when glorious Visions and rare Discoveries had holy Elisha, Daniel, John in Patmos, and other Worthies? John Huss, eminent for Holiness, his Name Huss in the Bohemian Language signifies a Goose; at his Martyrdom he told, That if they roasted him in the Fire, out of the Ashes of the Goose an hundred Years after, God would raise up a Swan in Germany, whose singing should fright all those Vipers; which was exactly fulfilled in Luther (whose Name in Bohemian Language signifies a Swan) whom God raised up as a famous Instrument to advance a Work of Reformation: He was a Man of great Holiness, one time after he was long in the Mount with God in Prayer, he came down to his perplexed Friend, and told him with great Confidence, it should go well with Germany all his Days, he knew what was done in Heaven by that which God had done in his own Heart: This is no other thing than what is in that great and choice Promise, Jer. 33. 3. Call with me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. Ezek. 1. 28. The Spirit of the Lord was upon me, and he will shew thee his Counsel.

11thly The more Pleasures will God take in all your religious Duties, Holiness puts a Divine Savour on all the Saints Services, Add. 3. 3. He shall purify the Sons of Levi, and purge them as Gold and Silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in Righteousness. Ver. 4. Their shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem, to please to the Lord. Ver. 16, 17. Thus they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkned and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before him, and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my Jews. Zech. 13. 9. I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as Silver is refined, and try them as Gold is tried; they shall call on my Name, and I will answer them; I will say, It is my People, and they shall say, The Lord is my God. The more Holiness, the less of Flesh and Corruption in all your Duties and Services, and the less of that, the more are our Duties God's Delight.

12thly Many who have been gained to Christ since you, do exceed and excel you in Holiness, how are ye then outstripped?

13thly No Persons under Heaven are more obliged to the Study of Holiness than ye Believers, ye are the only Persons made Partakers of the Divine Nature, your Principles, your Graces of Knowledge, Faith, Love, Patience, Humility and Self-denial, are more Excellent than of others, all Exhortations to advance in Holiness do more immediately concern you: How richly should the House be adorned with Holiness that is of God's own Building?

14thly The more Holiness, the more resolute and hardier for God, it enobles and raises the Heart to be zealous against Sin, more divinely to scorn the World, courageously to trample on Temptations, as Nebuchadnezzar, the three Children, and all the Prophets and Apostles, Prov. 28. 1. The righteous are bold as a Lion. So Luther, a Man of great Holiness, and of great Boldness, when the Emperor sent for him to Worms, and his Friends dissuaded him from going, Go, said he, I will surely go in Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, tho' there were as many Devils in Worms to resist me, as there are Tiles on the Houses: Another time when he and his Associates were threatened with Death or great Dangers, Come, (says he) Let us sing the 48 Psalm, and then let them do their worst.

15thly The more Holiness, it makes a Man the more useful in his Time, as David who served his Generation, Acts 13. 36. A Man with a mean Stock can be little serviceable to his Friends, but a rich Man may more promote their outward Condition: so a Man

with

Hebrews XII. Verse 9, 10.

153

with little Grace cannot be so useful either to Convert the graceless, or Confirm the gracious Believer, as the Man who hath more Grace in lively Exercise. A Candle lightens the Room, but the Sun the World: As none had more Holiness than Christ, so none was so publick Spirited, *he went up and down doing Good*. Many eminent Worthies are Examples of this publick Spirit for God's Service in their Generation, as *Moses, Nehemiah, Mordecai, Jethersaphat, Josiah, Paul*, and others.

13th, To provoke you to higher Degrees of Holiness, consider, that the Times wherein we live call for it. Hell seems broken loose, and Men strive to exceed others in Sin; what new coined Oaths, Blasphemies, Uncleaness, Debaucheries of all sorts among us? Sin appears every where with a *Whores forehead*: Now the wicked of the Times are, the holier should Believers be, *shining as Lights in the midst of a perverse Generation*; this is the way to convince the Consciences and stop the Mouths of the wicked World.

14th, Consider how Men of the World study to encrease in worldly Blessings, Estates and Honours, O what ado among Worldings to *lay House to House, and Field to Field*, they cross their Light, wound their Consciences, decline their Principles, and endanger their Souls to encrease in Riches. How sad is it that Satan hath more Service of a World for an Ounce of Gold, than God has from a Believer for a *Crown of Glory*? O what stark Fools are they who dare hazard the Loss of a Paradise for a Wilderness, a Crown for a Crumb?

15th, This will make our Master's Crown more weighty and glorious, the higher ye rise in Holiness. O fir, it is neither our seraphick Notions, pompous Professions, good Words, sweet Looks, neither our Civilities and Courtesies that will raise our Joy, or add to our Crown, but your Encrease in Holiness will do both, *2 Thess. 2. 19, 22*. For as Christ hath his thousand Shekels, so laborious faithful Ministers have their two hundred as their Reward, *Song 8. 12*. O what Honour that Ministers have the fifth Part of Christ's Reward!

16th, The more Holiness ye have here, the greater Happiness ye shall have hereafter. The more Grace on Earth, the more Glory in Heaven. To make this good, I premise, 1. That the Object of their Happiness, *which is God blessed for ever*, will be one and the same to all the Saints in the higher House, he will be no more one Believers God, than he will be every Believers God in Heaven. 2. They shall all share of the Beatifick Vision, they shall all have one happy Fruition of God, all the *Vessels of Glory* shall be filled to the Brim, with a clear Sight of God, and Enjoyment of him. 3. All Saints shall be freed from all Evils alike, the Aking-head and Unbelieving-heart, shall no more trouble them, *All tears shall be wiped from their eyes, Revel. 7. 17*. 4. There is a Difference betwixt the Essence and Substance of Glory (which consists in full Communion with God, and perfect Conformity to him) and the Degrees and Measures of it; the former is common to all Saints, the latter shall be distribute, to some more, to some less, answerable to the different Degrees of Grace and Holiness, the Saints have attained to here on Earth. Which may be proven, *First*, From Scriptures. *Secondly*, From Arguments. The following Scriptures make it evident, *1 Cor. 3. 8. Every one shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour*. As their Work differs, so shall their Reward, *1 Cor. 15. 41, 42. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The Comparison runs thus, as there is a Difference among the Celestial Bodies in their Glory and Brightness, so shall there be among Saints at the Resurrection, 2 Cor.*

U

9. 6. He

9. 6. He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. The Rewards of another Life shall bear some Proportion to the Works done here. *Luke 19. 12. to 20.* He who trades most with his Talents is rewarded most liberally. *Dan. 12. 3.* They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. Several Arguments may confirm this, that there are Degrees of Glory in Heaven. 1. There are diverse Degrees of Angels in Heaven, *Seraphims, Cherubims, Angels, and Archangels*; The Apostle speaks clearly of several Ranks and Orders of invisible Creatures, *Colos. 1. 16. Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers*. If of these blessed Angels who minister before the Lord there be diverse Degrees, why not also of Saints? 2. There are Degrees of Torments in Hell, *Matth 10. 14. Chap. 11. 22, 24.* Therefore by the Rule of Contraries, there are Degrees of Glory in Heaven. 3. God in this Life distributes his Gifts and Graces in different Degrees among his People in this Life, *1 Cor. 12. 19. To some one, to others five, to others ten Talents, Matth. Chap. 25.* Why may he not use Difference in the Life to come? 4. They who have more Holiness than others, bear his Image in the more noble Print of it, they have a brighter Character of God on them; Now the Children who are most like the Father, are usually best Provided for. 5. To deny Degrees of Glory in Heaven, is to frustrate and render useless many rich and notable Exhortations in Scripture; as *1 Cor. 15. 58. 2 Pet. 1. 5—11. Growing all diligence, add to your Faith, virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Secondly, I shall give some Directions, that may be useful in order to your making Progress in Holiness. And, First, Labour to be more sensible of your Spiritual Wants and Defects in Grace and Holiness, ye want much more than ye have attained to: Now, the more a Believer sees himself defective in Holiness, he will labour after it the more, *Psal. 119. 59.* The believing Psalmist looks backward on his former ways, what they have been, and in verse 60. looks forward to his Duty, he makes haste and delays not to keep God's commands. 2ly, Set the Lord ay before your Eyes, be still as in his Presence, thus became David eminent in Holiness, *Psal. 16. 8. Psal. 119. 163. I have kept thy precepts, and thy testimonies, for all thy ways are before me, Job 31. 4.* 3ly, Fix your selves under an holy Ministry, resign your selves to his Ministry, whose Work it is to Preach up Holiness, to Promote, Encourage and Extol it. 4ly, Be most in Converse with them that are most eminent in Holiness, with the saints, the excellent ones in the earth, *Psal. 16. 3.* with them that fear God, *Mal. 3. 16.* The Disciples by discoursing with Christ had an holy Flame raised in their Hearts, *Luke 24. 32.* 5ly, Be much in secret Prayer and Closet Duties, Christ takes great Pleasure to hear his People pour out their Souls to him in a Corner, *Song 2. 14. O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* As secret Meals are Fatning, so secret Duties are Soul-enriching; secret Prayer is like Jacob's Ladder: Ambrose a holy Man used to say, *I am never less Alone than when most Alone, for then I enjoy the Presence of my God most Freely, Fully and Sweetly.* Peter had a glorious Manifestation when on the House-top alone Praying, *Acts 10th Chapter*, and so also it was with Daniel *Chap. 9. 10.* after his secret and serious Prayer. 6ly, Subdue and Mortifie your Predominant Sins, set about this with all your Might, O do not defer nor delay! Think not ye can both Fight, Over-

come

come and Triumph in one Day, that they will lay down their Arms, and let you trample on them without a Blow, ye must rise with all your Strength, and treat them like the *Levites Concubine*, put them to Death, and cut them in Pieces: Throw the *Jezabel* over the Window, stone the *Achan* to the Death. 7^{ly}, Dwell much on the Holiness of God, who of himself is glorious in holiness; By constantly looking on this, ye may come to be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory.

Thirdly, I proposed to give some Evidences of an high Pitch and eminent Degree of Holiness: Try then your selves by the following Particulars.

First, The more a Soul can warm its Heart at the Promises, cleave to and rest on them, suck Marrow, Fatness and Sweetness out of them, even when Divine Providences seem to run Crois to the Promises; As *Jacob*, Gen. 32. 6, 7, 8. compared with v. 9, 11, 12. 2^{ly}, The more a Man overcome Evil with Good on Holy and Spiritual Accounts; as, because of God's Honour, his Command, the Credit of the Gospel, the Conviction, Conversion, and Salvation of Souls, is concerned in it: The greater Measures of Holiness that Person hath attained to. To return Reproach for Reproach, Evil for Evil, is Natural to us; But to Love them that Hate us, Bless them that Curse us, and Pray for them that Persecute us, these are above Nature, of Kin to Holiness, and prove the Increase thereof in the Soul. 3^{ly}, When a Man is ordinarily Holy out of Religious Duties, as well as in them, he is always Spiritual, Heavenly, Holy, Humble, Serious, and Watchful: *Moses's face* shined as Gloriously after he came off the Mount, as when upon it. 4^{ly}, The more a Man can Joy and rejoice under Tribulations and Afflictions, the greater Measure of Holiness he hath attained to: It is much not to Grumble and Murmur, more to be Silent and Patient, but most to Joy and Rejoice, as *Paul*, Rom. 5. 3, 4. 2 Cor. 7. 4. Chap. 12. 9, 10. 5^{ly}, The more Extensive a Man's Obedience be to Divine Commands, the greater Measure of Holiness he hath, so *Caleb* followed the Lord fully, Numb. 14. 24: *Zacharias and Elizabeth* walked in all the commands of the Lord blameless, Luke 1. 5, 6. 6^{ly}, The more a Man Conflicts with Heart-sins, Spiritual and Invisible Sins, that ly most hid and obscure from the Eyes of the World; the more Spiritual Victories and Conquests he obtains over them, when the Heart riseth with all its Strength against Spiritual-pride and Self-ends, this is an Evidence of a more eminent Degree of Holiness. 7^{ly}, The more a Man is Exercised and Busied in the most Internal and Spiritual Duties of Religion, the greater Holiness he hath; As, in Self-examination, Self-resignation, Mortification, Self-loathing, Self-judging and Condemning, Divine Meditation, Praying in the Spirit, Watching over the Heart, Applying the Blood of Christ, the Death of Christ, the Love and Grace of Christ, and the Word of Christ to his own Soul. 8^{ly}, When Spiritual Internal Principles and Motives carries a Man on in Religious Duties, acting from a Sense of Divine Love, of Christ's Spiritual Presence, of the Divine Excellency and Sweetness of Communion and Fellowship with God: This argues a great Measure of Holiness. 9^{ly}, The more Solid, Precise, and Accurate in Duties and Services, the greater Holiness, the more Endear'd to Duties, the more the Heart is affected in and with them. 10^{ly}, The more a Man makes it his great Business and Work, in all things to approve himself to God, and to be accepted of him, Psal. 139. 23, 24. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me. — 11^{ly}, The more a Man deny himself when he hath Opportunity to raise, to make great and seek himself, it is the greater Evidence of Holiness: So did *Moses*, *Nehemiah*, and *Daniel*.

This trying your selves, if Holiness be Encreasing in your Souls, being a Matter of great Concern, I shall give some more particular Evidences, by which ye may Examine and Try it; But I shall first premise a few Words to quicken you to Seriousness.

First, Consider, this is of greatest Concern to your Immortal Souls, whether by all the Pains God has taken on you by Chastisements, this Holiness be produced in you, which is God's great Design: Your all lies on this, a Mistake in your Search may make you Miserable to all Eternity. *2ly*, A cordial Willingness to enter this Work is a hopeful Evidence of your Integrity and Sanctity, others had rather go to Hell in the Dark, than be laid in the Ballance of the Sanctuary: As pure Gold fears neither Fire nor Touchstone, so a pure Heart dares venture to be put to the Trial. *3ly*, There are many who deceive themselves on this Head, thinking themselves to be Something when they are Nothing, Gal. 6. 3. *They have a name to live, but are dead.* Revel. 3. 1. *They say they are rich and increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* Revel. 3. 17. These notwithstanding of all their confident Pretences, shall be boasted out of God's Presence, *Departs from me I know you not, ye are workers of iniquity.* *4ly*, If on Trial ye find the Truth of your Holiness, it will turn greatly to your Advantage and Spiritual Comfort, the Being of Holiness secures thy Heaven hereafter, but the Seeing of it yields thee an Heaven here. *6ly*, Many who have real Holiness, yet for want of a narrow Search and Trial, are sorely afflicted with Fears and Doubts about their want of it. Therefore be serious in Trying by these further Evidences.

First, Thou art swallowed up in Admiration of the Holiness of God, unholy Souls may be taken with God's other Excellencies, but only holy Souls are affected with his Holiness, *Exod. 15. 11. Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?* Thus doth Moses praise this noble Divine Perfection. And *Isaiah Chap. 12. v. 6. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.* And the Angels, *Isa. 6. 3. Cried one to another, Holy, holy, holy Lord of hosts.* But on the contrair, nothing renders God more terrible to an unholy Soul, than his Holiness, *Isa. 30. 11. Cause the holy One of Israel to cease from us.*

Secondly, Where it is Real, it is Diffusive over the whole Soul, over the inward and outward Man, *Psal. 45. 13. The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold:* He that is truly Holy, is so in Heart and Walk, in Shop and in Closet, on Sabbath and Work-day.

Thirdly, Such set the highest Value on every thing that is Holy, they count the Saints the excellent ones in the earth, *Psal. 16. 3. more excellent than their neighbour,* Prov. 12. 6.

Fourthly, Where it is Real, it is always Advancing after further Degrees, we can never be Holy enough, the holy Man sets no Bounds to his Desires and Endeavours after it, but goes on from strength to strength, till he appear before the Lord in Zion, *Psal. 84. 7. He presseth toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,* Phil. 3. 19.

Fifthly, It hath a holy Hatred attending it, a Detestation of all that is contrary to it, and that on Holy and Spiritual Accounts, *Psal. 119. 104. Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.* One Predominant Sin lovingly welcomed and entertained, is enough to destroy the Soul for ever: To explain this Hatred a little, 1. An holy Heart rises in Hatred against secret Sins that are not seen but by the Believer's Eye, *Psal. 119. 113. I hate vain thoughts,* says David. *How shall I do this great wickedness,*

wickedness, and sin against God? says Joseph, when tempted by his wanton Mistress, Gen. 39. 9. *Hezekiah* humbled himself for the Pride of his Heart, 2 Chron. 32. 24. 2. Against the least Sins as well as the greatest: I know there are no little Sins, since there is no little Hell to Punish, no little God to sin against; Holy Souls are afraid of Sins that appear least in the World's Eye, Psal. 119. 163. 1 Sam. 24. 10. For they know, 1. That if it be not prevented, it will become greater, 1 Sam. 12. 25. 2. That little Sins have exposed both Sinners and Saints to great Punishments, Numb. 15. 30. *Saul* lost two Kingdoms at once, his own, and the Kingdom of Heaven for sparing *Agag*: How justly and severely hath the Lord punished *Lot's* Wife for looking back, *Adam* for eating the forbidden Fruit, fifty thousand Men of *Bethshemesh* for curious looking into the Ark? 3. That an holy God looks and expects that the least Sins should be shunned, that *Babylons* little ones should be dashed against the stones. 4. That indulging the least Sin is Ground for any Man to question his Integrity and Ingenuity towards God. 5. That the least Sin cost Christ his precious Blood. 3ly, The holy Heart rises against darling complexion Sins, that are beloved as Right Hands, and Right Eyes, Psal. 18. 23. *I watchfully kept my self from mine iniquity.*

Sixth Evidence, Such as are encreasing in Holiness, are really and cordially affected and afflicted with their Vileness and Want of Holiness, Job 40. 4. *Behold I am vile,* Chap. 42. 6. *I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* Psal. 73. 22. *I was as a beast before thee.* Prov. 30. 2, 3. *Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have I the knowledge of the holy.* Luke 5. 8. *I am a sinful man.*

Seventhly, Holiness makes the most painful Duties, and such as are most cross to the Flesh, very Pleasant, Easy and Delightful; It is as Natural for a holy Man to Pray, Meditate, Mortifie his Lusts, and Examine himself; as it is for him to Breathe, Rom. 7. 22. *I delight in the law of the Lord, after the inward man,* Psal. 119. 16, 35, 47, 52.

Eighthly, Such labour to make others Holy, they love not to go to Heaven alone, to be Happy alone; Holiness is so sweet a morsel, as they that taste it, cannot but Commend it to others; as *Moses*, Numb. 11. 29. *Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them.* A real Christian will never make a Monopolie of Holiness, Acts 26. 24. *Paul* said, *I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.* Abraham, Gen. 18. 19. *Commanded his children and household after him, to walk in the way of the Lord.* Constantine was truly Great in this, That he gathered his whole Court, and caused Scripture be Read and Explained to them, that they might be made Holy Courtiers, and fitted for the Court of Heaven.

Ninthly, If truly Holy, thou wilt shew it in the Use of Earthly and common Things, as well as in Spiritual and Heavenly Things; In Eating and Drinking, 1 Cor. 10. 31. In Buying and Selling, Paying and Receiving, Isa. 23. 18. *Her merchandise and her hire, shall be holiness to the Lord.* Every Piece of such a Man's Civility favours of Sanctity; in the Parts of his common Conversation, ye will see something of the Power of Religion, Job 5. 24. *Thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.*

Tenthly, Such are much affected with the Unholiness of others, Psal. 119. 53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.* Verse 136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes: because they keep not thy law.* Jeremiah Chap. 9. v. 1. *Cries, Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.* Ezek. 9. 4. *The Lord bids set a mark on the fore heads of the*

the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst of the city. When the Slaughter Weapon of Destruction consumes others, they are marked for Preservation. *Elijah* had rather die than see *Ahab* and *Jezabel* call such Contempt and Dishonour on his God. The Reason why the holy Man mourns for the Sins of others are, 1. Because he mourns over Sin, as Sin, his Heart is grieved for it, as a Breach of God's holy Law, which is broken by the Sins of others, as well as by his own. 2. By other Mens Sins, the holy Soul is put in mind of the Badness of his own Heart. *Bernard* in one of his Sermons, speaks of an old Man, When he saw any Man Sin he wept, and being asked why? Answered, *The Lord's eye is over the Sinners to Day, and I may to Morrow.* 3. This is the Way to be kept pure from other Mens Sins, otherwise he will be guilty of them. 4. Because he looks on other Mens Sins as Crucifixions of Christ, they are a Crown of Thorns set on his Head, and this makes a holy Man Groan and Sigh. 5. That he may be Instrumental to keep off Wrath, how oft did *Moses* by his Tears extinguish the Wrath of an angry God? The Lord's People know that one sinner destroys much good, *Eccles. 9. 18.* One *Achan* troubled the whole Camp, what Wrath then may Multitudes of Sinners bring upon the Generation? As a Mariner foreseeth a Storm when the Clouds are gathering, so they foresee Wrath impending in God's Decree and Threatning: This made *Elisha* weep, *2 Kings 8. 11, 12.* and *Abraham* weep for *Sodom*, *Gen. 18.* But if Wrath should not be prevented, they know of a safe Chamber of Refuge, where they may be hid till God's Indignation be over-past, *Isa. 26. 20.* 6. From Compassion to the Souls of others, *Paul* who once was a Stranger to the Grace of God, when he reproves the Sins of Saints or Sinners, speaks in a melting Frame, with the Tear in his Eye, *Phil. 3. 18. 2 Cor. 12. 21.*

Eleventhly, If thou be truly Holy, thou wilt Love and be Affected with the Word, because of its Purity and Holiness, *Psal. 119. 140.* Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it. *Rom. 7. 12.* The command is holy, just and good. Therefore *Paul* verse 22. says, I delight in the law of God after the inward man. Some are affected and tickled for the Elegancy of the Style, Delicacy of the Words, Smoothness of Language, and Gracefulness of Delivery. And these do with Sermons as Men with May-Flowers, throw them away when withered: But the holy Soul is taken with it, because it is Holy. If it be asked, How shall I know if I be so affected with the VWord, that I may take it as a sound Mark of my being Holy? Answer, 1. If thou love the whole VWord, for every Part of it is Holy, the Commands, Promises and Threatnings, and endeavour Conformity to the whole. 2. If thou love it at all times as well in Adversity as in Prosperity, *Psal. 119. 54.* Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. 3. If thou be most affected with these Parts of the Word, that most excite to Holiness, *1 Pet. 1. 15.* It is written, be ye holy, as I am holy, *Ephes. 5. 15, 16.* *Phil. 2. 15.* That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

Twelfthly, An holy Soul proposes always to himself holy Aims and Ends in his Actions and Undertakings, as *Paul*, *Rom. 14. 7, 8.* none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. If this Sincerity in your End and Design may bear the Lord's Approbation, then, 1. Ye will do Duty when all external Encouragements fail, *Habak. 2. 17, 18.* Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, — Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Three things incline the holy Soul to Duty under all Disappointments; A Principle of Divine Love constrains, *2 Cor. 5. 14.* A mighty Assistance

HEBREWS XII. Verse 11.

Now no Chastening for the present seemeth to be Joyous, but Grievous: Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness, unto them which are Exercised thereby.

IN these Words the Apostle concludes his Discourse concerning Sufferings, with the Use of them; and our Duty of bearing them patiently: Which here he delivers in a general Rule, wherein he ballanceth the Good and Evil of them; shewing how Incomparably the former exceeds the latter, the same with that Argument he insists on, 2 Co. 4. 17. The Words consist, *First*, Of a Concession, that Chastisements occasion Trouble and Sorrow, this he Grants and will not contend about it. But *Secondly*, He shews there is a far greater Benefit to be gained by Chastisements, *They yield the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness*, and this far Counterballanceth all Trouble and Sorrow they can at present occasion.

I begin with the Concession, in which consider 1. The Introduction by the Particle *Now*, rendered *Now*, not as an Adverb of Time, but as a *Particle of Attention*. 2. The Universality of the Expression, *Every Chastening*, none are excepted, for what is affirmed is of the Nature of Chastisements; If any thing befall a Man that is Evil, and not grieving to him, it may be a Judgment, but it is not a Chastisement to him. 3. The limited time condescended on, wherein he gives his Sentiment, it is *for the present*, Affliction at its first Attack, when the Wound is fresh, it galls and afflicts most. 4. The thing affirmed of it, *It is, not Joyous but Grievous*, whatever good Effect it may have afterward, it represents it self otherways in the mean time, and really is afflicting, it is not a sweet Confection, but a bitter Potion.

From this Part of the Text, Observe 1. *That the most kindly Chastisements bring always Sorrow with them.* Some reckon it a Point of Courage not to be affected with Grief about them; it is true, so far as they are from Men, there is an Heroick Temper of Spirit required in undergoing them, *So as in nothing terrified by Adversaries*, but we are called to have a deep Sense of God's Rebukes and Chastisements.

Observe 2. *Not to have a Sense of Godly Sorrow in Afflictions, so as to fear God's Displeasure, and turn from Evil, is through stout heartedness to despise the Chastening of the Lord.* Which is an Evil we are warned against Verse 9.

Observe 3. *The Nature and End of Afflictions, are not to be measured by our present Sense of them, but from God's Design by them on his People.*

Observe 4. *All the Trouble of Afflictions is but for the present, while in this World at most.* In a little time we will leave them and their Trouble behind us for evermore.

Now, Because these Purposes have been touched at in the preceeding Verses, the Scope being the same, I convert them all into this general Proposition.

Observe

Observe, That the most kindly of God's Chastisements to his People bring always some Master of Grief and Sorrow with them, as those exercised thereby; tho' the Grief attending them be but momentary, and therefore may the better be endured. *Psal. 30. 5. His Anger endureth but a Moment, in his Favour is Life; weeping may endure for a Night, but joy cometh in the Morning.*

In opening this Doctrine, I shall, First Give Reasons why Grief and Sorrow still attend Chastisements. 2^d Prove that this is but momentary for the present only.

But to make Way for this, I shall enquire what this Sorrow is that attends Chastisements to the Lord's People. *Answer Negatively*, 1. It is not a bewailing of the Flesh because of the Pain and Uneasiness of the Trial. 2. It is not the Disorder of the Affections on the Account of things for the present smarting to us. 3. It is not a heartless carnal Despondency under present Pressures. But *Positively*, It is a filial Sense of God's Displeasure for Sin as the Cause of the present Chastisement, and ye will know it by these Properties, 1. It is hearty, such as greatly affects and afflicts the Soul, it is great, bitter, cordial and humbling; Sin becomes an heavy Burden to the Soul, *Psal. 38. 4. 2. Cor. 7. 9.* Grief for Sin as against God, *Psal. 51.* 4. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned,* not as it withholds temporal Blessings as *Esau's*, or brings temporal Judgments as *Abel's*, or excludes from Mercy as *Cain's*, or as it brings Hell into the Conscience as *Judas's*; all this is but worldly Sorrow unto Death: But true Sorrow for Sin is for it as it is against God, as it reflects on his Holiness, Mercy, Goodness, Power, Truth, Justice and Sovereignty. 3. It is Holy, for Sin as Soul-defiling, tho' no suffering were to follow, the Believer would sorrow for Sin, *Psal. 51. 3.* This others in Pardon, *Jer. 31. 19. Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after that I was instructed I smote upon my Thigh, I was ashamed, yea even confounded because I did hear the reproach of my youth.* Then follows, *v. 20. Is Ephraim my dear Son, is he a pleasant Child?* The Seal is set on Wax when it melts, and God seals his Pardon to melting Souls and Hearts.

Next, I am to give Reasons why Grief and Sorrow attend the Chastisements of Believers: And the great Reason is, because the Original and Rise of them is Sin, and when the Controversie is for Sin in the Believer's Soul, how can they be but grieved? For, 1. Thereby God's holy Law is violate, every Sin is a Transgression of the Law. 2. It is a contumacious Affront to him, walking contrary to God, lifting up Arms in his Face, *Job 15. 29.* stretching out the Hand against him. 3. It is an Act of high Ungratitude, God feeds, clothes and protects you from Dangers; yet ye not only forget his Mercies, but abuse them, *Hosea 2. 8. I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplied her Silver and Gold, which they prepared for Baal.* 2^d, As Sin is dishonouring to God, so it is of universal Prejudice to all Creatures, it is their Burden and Grief, all the Antipathies among them come by Sin, the Creation groans under it, *Rom. 8. 22.* 3^d, Sin is worse in the Believers than in others, and therefore no wonder their Chastisements for it be attended with Grief; and that, 1. Because they have something to restrain from Sin which others want, a Principle of Grace to give Check to it, Impulse of God's Spirit to dissuade from it. 2. Their Sin is against more Mercy, it is a Mercy to hear, but a greater Mercy to be made to hear the joyful Sound, to accept and close with Christ, to have Communion with him in Ordinances and Duties, how much should ye do more than others? 3. They Sin against greater Experiences, they have felt the Bitterness of Sin in the Pangs of the new Birth, and yet after the Lord hath spoke Peace to them, they ventured on that abominable thing God hates; it was an Aggravation of

Solomon's Sin, *His Heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which appeared to him twice,* 1 Kings 11. 9. 4. Their Sin is against their Sonship, this brings Grief with their Chastisements, for them who are Sons and Daughters of the King of Heaven, to conspire with his Enemy, and rebel against him. 5. Their Sins bring a greater Reproach upon Religion, for the Wicked there is no better expected of them, it is no wonder to see a Toad spit Poison, *Dan. 12. 10. The wicked shall do wickedly, none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand,* 2 Sam. 12. 19. then Sin causes the Enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. 6. Their Sins are committed against more Vows and Engagements, than the Sins of others. 1. Good Reason that Grief attend Chastisements for Sin, for it is the worst of all Evils, no other Evil makes Man subject to God's Wrath but only Sin, no other Evil hinders our future Happiness, no other Evil is universally Evil and no Good in it: No other Evil is the only Cause of all Calamities but Sin, this drowned the old World, sentenced Mankind to die the Death, threw Adam out of Paradise, and Angels out of Heaven, darkened the Beauty of the Creation; procured National Evils, as Sword, Famine and Pestilence; Temporal Evils, as Sickness, Death, Crosses, Losses; and in End brings on God's eternal Vengeance.

Lastly, For clearing this Doctrine, I am to prove, That both Chastisements, and Grief attending them are but Momentary, *for the present now*, and therefore may and should be more easily born by the People of God. That they are but for the present, appears, First, From the Experience of the People of God in all Ages, *Psal. 30. 5. Weeping may endure for a Night, but joy cometh in the Morning.* 2 Cor. 4. 17. *Our light Affliction which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.* 2. From the alleviating Ingredients God has mixed with them, *Psal. 89. 32, 33. I will visit their Transgressions with the Rod, and their Iniquities with Stripes; nevertheless my loving Kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my Covenant to fail.* Isa. 54. 7, 8. *For a small Moment have I forsaken thee, but with great Mercies will I gather thee: In a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee for a Moment, but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.* 3. There is a fixed Period and End shortly to be put to them all, namely at Death, which is at hand: And then Sin, Sorrow and Afflictions shall take Wings and flee away eternally, the Believer and they shall never meet again. Therefore should not the Believer take in good part, and bear patiently what God is pleased to lay on of these momentary Chastisements, especially considering, that tho' for the present they are not joyful but grievous; yet afterward they yield the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness: And this leads me to the

Second part of my Text, wherein the Apostle takes off the Weight of the former Objection, by opposing the Benefit of Afflictions as far transcending any present Loss the People of God can undergo: And this he doth clear in three Particulars, First, By shewing what the Benefit is. Secondly, When it is received. Thirdly, By whom it is received.

First, The Benefit of these Chastisements is expressed by a threefold Gradation, 1. That it yieldeth Fruit. 2. This Fruit is the Fruit of Righteousness. 3. That this Fruit of Righteousness is peaceable. For the first, It yieldeth Fruit, it is not, it will yield, but it doth so in the present Season. When God purgeth and pruneth his Vine, it is that it may bring forth more Fruit. This Fruit is either, 1. Taking away Sin by Mortification, *Isa. 27. 9.* Or, 2. The Increase of Holiness, of which we have spoken on the former Verse. 2. This Fruit is the Fruit of Righteousness. By Righteousness here is meant the internal Principle of Holiness and Obedience, and by the Fruit of it is meant

meant Encrease in the vigorous Exercise of the Graces of the Spirit, as the Product of sanctified Afflictions, Rom. 5. 3, 4, 5. 3b. This Fruit of Righteousness is peaceable, Isa. 32. 17. The work of Righteousness shall be Peace. It is so on a threefold Account, 1. It is a Pledge and Evidence of our Peace with God under Chastisements, we are ready to question what our State is, God seeming displeased, but when these Fruits are brought forth, they are an high Proof of our Peace, and that thereby God designs our Good. 2. They bring Peace into our own Minds, by these the Heart and Soul is quieted, and the Man brought to possess his Soul in Patience. 3. Sanctified Chastisements oblige us to follow Peace with all Men, Ver. 14. *And ye shall have the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit.*

Secondly, We have the Season and Time wherein these Chastisements yield this Fruit, and that is *afterward*. This Effect does not appear at first for a while, we are surprised with them as *Job*, but these Fruits are produced in a little time to these that are exercised thereby.

Thirdly, By whom the Benefit is received, it is *them that are exercised thereby*; this is an Exercise with Diligence and Vehemence, being an Allusion to these who strip themselves Naked to put forth all their Strength in the Olympick Games, what is the Nature of this Exercise I shall shew afterward.

From this latter part of the Text Observe 1. That there is a special Good and Advantage in the Fruits of Righteousness, that is more than able to ballance that which is grievous, evil and afflicting in Chastisements.

Observe 2. That who would experience and feel these peaceable Fruits of Righteousness following Afflictions and Trials, must be kindly and tenderly exercised thereby.

I begin with the first, That there is a special Good and Advantage in the Fruit of Righteousness produced by sanctified Afflictions, that is more than able to ballance that which is grievous, evil and afflicting in them.

For illustrating this Doctrine, I shall enquire, First, What these Fruits are. 2dly, What is the Good and Advantage in them to Ballance what is grievous in Afflictions.

First, What these Fruits of Righteousness produced by Afflictions are? For Answer among many, I shall name these few, 1. The lively Exercise of the Royal Grace of Faith. 2. The Peace of God which passeth all Understanding. 3. Believers by sanctified Afflictions get Soul satiating Food, Micah 7. 14. 4. Spiritual Chearfulness and Joy of Heart, Acts 5. 41. 5. Victory and Conquest over predominant Idols.

Secondly, I shall make evident what great Good and Advantage is in these Fruits of Righteousness to ballance what is grievous in Afflictions. As to the First, Faith, this is attended with many notable Advantages which swallow up all that is grievous or sorrowful in Afflictions. For, First, It is an Heart-cleansing Grace that justifies the Soul, and cleanseth the Heart from the Guilt of Sin, and that, 1. By pointing out a sufficient Pay-Master the blessed Jesus, who hath become Sin for us, that we may be the Righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. 5. 21. In him we have Redemption through his Blood, the forgiveness of Sins, Eph. 1. 7. 2. By making us one with Christ, so that our Sins are made his, and his Obedience is made ours, 2 Cor. 5. 21. Jer. 23. 6. Gal. 3. 13, 14. A second Advantage Faith brings, is inward Purity of Heart, Acts 15. 9. Purifying their Hearts by Faith, it cleanses, First, By way of Argumentation. 2dly, By way of Operation. First, It fills the Mouth with Arguments for Purity and Holiness, as From the Nature of God, he is an Holy God, and therefore will have a Holy People, Lev. 11. 44. I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore Sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be Holy, for I am Holy. 2. His Merciespreis Holiness, hath he died for me, shall not I live

to himself, *2 Cor. 5. 12.* Hath he separate me from the evil World, and effectually called me to himself, that I may be Holy, & Part. 1. 14. and shall I not be content to his lineage? *Act. 8. 20.* Hath he freed me from the damning, and shall I delight in the damning Power of Sin? *Do his Promises afford such noble Encouragements to help me in Heart Purification, 2 Cor. 1. 1.* and shall I be so unaccountably foolish as never to make Use of them? *2. 12.* It cleanses operatively by making Use of Christ for that End, Faith leads to the Merits of Christ, as a Fountain opened for washing away Sin and Uncleaness, *Zeck. 13. 1.* To the Intercession of Christ to be Smithed by his Tomb, *John. 7. 17.*

A third Advantage of this Fruit of Righteousness, Faith, it is an Heart-commanding Grace, it is the Task Master of the Soul that puts every other Grace to Work: Yea as it commands for Christ, so it brings Strength from Christ to do what is commanded; to every Precept it discovers always a Promise added; if God command us to repent, believe, to make a new Heart, to wash, cleanse and circumcise them, he hath promised in his new Covenant to do what he commands us. *4th.* Faith is a Soul-calming and Heart-quieting Grace, especially under Trials, it allays Passions, hushes unruly Affections, and silences Mummings; thus it made Eli quietly submit, *1 Sam. 3. 18.* It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good; and David says, *I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth, because thou didst it, Psal. 39. 14.*

Fifthly, Faith is a Soul-securing Grace, *Prov. 29. 25.* Whoso putteth his Trust in the Lord shall be safe, he shall be lifted up on high above Storms and Dangers, nothing else can shelter the Soul but believing, a resolved Trust in God through Christ. *1.* Sets a Man on a Soul-securing Bottom, it leads him to the Rock that is higher than he; once Man's Foundation was himself, but that was but a sandy one, even in Innocency, and so came of it: But now God has appointed it out of our selves in Christ, the Winds may blow, and Rains fall, but no fear of the House, the Foundation is the Rock of Ages, he that trusts in the Lord, Mercy shall compass him on every side. *2.* It states the Believer in Soul-securing Promises, *Isa. 43. 2.* When thou passest through the Waters I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee, *Heb. 13. 5, 6.* For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what Man can do to me, Christ is a Covert and hiding Place from the Storm, against this the Gates of Hell shall not prevail. *3.* It invests the Believer with Soul-securing Privileges, it makes them Sons and Daughters to the most High, *John 1. 12.* *1 John 3. 1.* and will not a Father secure his Child? They are the Spouse and Members of Christ, will not the Head protect the Members, and the Husband the Wife? They are Christ's Inheritance, *Deut. 32. 9.* The Lord's Portion is his People, and Israel is the lot of his Inheritance, therefore he will take care of his own. So be your Afflictions what they will, the Fruit of Righteousness ballanceth all.

Sixthly, Faith is a Soul and Self-humbling Fruit of Righteousness, to this End it furnisheth the Soul, *1.* With Self-humbling Considerations from its own Unworthiness, *Job 42. 5.* from the Justice and Holiness of God, and from the Threatnings of his Law against Sin. *2.* It realizeth all this to the Soul which God hath said against Sin, this sends the Man home to lie in the Dust, as *Josiah* did, *2 Kings 22. 19.* and to humble himself at God's Footstool; when the Man believeth that all the Evil God has Threatned against Sin will inevitably be execute without Repentance and Humiliation. *3.* Faith makes all things present, *Heb. 11. 13.* it looks upon what is said of Death and Hell as at hand, it brings it home to the Believers Door, so as it is cast down and humbled.

Seemingly, Faith is a kindly Soul-melting and Heart-softning Grace, the Believers Trials mind him of the Sufferings of Christ on his Account, and he cannot look on a broken Christ but with a broken Heart. 8ly, It is Heart pacifying, and this leads to

A second Fruit of Righteousness produced by sanctified Trials, namely Peace, this is insinuate in the Text, and is an inseparable Fruit of real Faith, *Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God.* *Rom. 14. 13. Now the God of Hope fill you with all Peace and Joy in believing.* *Isa. 26. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.* By Nature, *Qua sunt supra nos, intra nos, infra nos, sunt contra nos*; God is displeased, Conscience is stormy, and all the Creatures are commisionate against us. But now being Believers, all are at Peace; for 1. The Controversie betwixt God and us is ended, Faith hath taken up the Quarrel. 2. All within us is now at Peace; a God reconciled to us grants the Peace which passeth all Understanding to keep our Hearts and Minds through Christ Jesus, *Phil. 4. 7.* 3. All Creatures are at Peace with the Believer, *Job 3. 23. For thou shalt be in League with the Stones of the Field, and the Beasts of the Field shall be at Peace with thee.* *Prov. 16. 7. When a Man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his Enemies to be at Peace with him.* Now Faith makes all at Peace, 1. By making us Servants to the God of Peace, in whose Service there is Peace, *Prov. 3. 17. All his Paths are Peace.* *Psal. 29. 11. The Lord will bless his People with Peace.* *Psal. 37. 37. Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright, for the latter end of that Man is Peace.* *Psal. 84. 8. The Lord will speak Peace to his People, and to his Saints.* 2. By making us Subjects to Christ the Prince of Peace, who is our Peace, *Eph. 2. 14.* 1. Meritoriously, by shedding his Blood to procure it, *Col. 1. 20. Having made Peace by the Blood of his Cross.* *Isa. 53. 5. The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him.* 2. Efficiently, by working Peace in us, pacifying the stormy Conscience, and establishing the Soul by the Word on which he causeth us to hope.

If it be *Objected*, Many have Peace who are not Believers. *Answer* 1. By Concession they may be quiet from Trouble, *Psal. 73. 5. They are not in Trouble as other Men.* But 2. It is a false Peace, a true and open War is better than such a Peace. 3. It is not the Peace of God, but of the Devil, *The strong Man armed keepeth his Palace, his Goods are in Peace, Luke 11. 21.* 4. An outward not an inward Peace, *In midst of their Laughter the Heart is sorrowful.* 5. It is the Peace of a dreaming sleeping Man, not of one awaked. 6. It is the Peace of a condemned Man before his Execution, a Calm before a fearful Storm; but for true Peace there is none, *saieth my God, to the Wicked, Isa. 57. 21.*

If it be further *Objected*, But many even Believers want Peace. *Answer* 1. They cannot be thought to have a Perfection of Peace, because they want a Perfection of Grace, both are referred to the higher House. 2. It is a Peace joined with War, *the Flesh against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh*, and till this War be ended, no perfect Peace to them. 3. They may want the Sense of Peace, but not the Ground of Peace, which is, Reconciliation with God and Interest in Christ. 4. Even Believers may have some secret Truce with, and Connivance at some Idol, and for this God may hide his Peace from them, till their *Jonah* be cast over, their *Achan* be stoned to Death, the *Sheba* the Traitor, his Head must be thrown over the Wall. 5. It is not as they are Believers they want Peace, had they more Faith they would have more Peace, they give way to jealousy and mistrusting God, quarrelling his way with them, and so raise their Evidences; a quarrelling Heart cannot but be unpeaceable. *Answer* 6. The Reason why Believers have no more Peace, is, because they seek it not more in a way of be-

believing, they seek it more in the Law than in the Gospel, more in Sanctification than Justification, more in Precept than in Promise, more in their own Obedience than in Christ's: So long as ye make the Ground of your Peace any thing within your selves, or wrought by your selves, ye will never have Fulness of Peace, every Imperfection will disturb this Peace, and raise a new Storm; ye must seek it in the God of Peace, in Christ the Prince of Peace, who hath promised in himself, *Ye shall have Peace*, John 16. 33.

A third Fruit of Righteousness following sanctified Afflictions, is Soul-fatning Food, Micah 7. 14: there are sore Afflictions threatned in the preceeding part of the Chapter, but what is provided for God's People to ballance all these, *Feed thy People with thy Rod, the Flock of thy Heritage which dwell solitarily in the Wood*. Afflictions when sanctified starve Sin, but fatten and feed the Soul, causing it not to provide for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof. 1. By subduing and pining away and crucifying Soul-destroying Lusts, which hinder spiritual Growth and Thriving; Afflictions are a Purge to carry these off. 2. By putting the Soul in a fatning Posture, when the Rod is lying on, how precious is the Word of God! Psal. 119. 92. *Unless thy Law had been my Delight, I had perished in my Affliction*. These are the green Pastures and still Waters where they are led, here is Milk for Babies, and Meat for Strong Men: The Rod labours them, and their Exercise under it gives them Appetite, so as they come to it as a starved hungry Man to a Feast, and every Word in the Bible is like Honey-comb to the Soul, they drink it in better than their necessary Food. May not this Fruit of Righteousness ballance the Trouble of Afflictions? 3ly, By feeding them with Soul-fatning Rarities, Meat that the World knows not of, sanctified Rods put Meat in the Believers Mouth, that Strangers to the hidden Life of Grace know nothing of, yet it is the Cream of Nourishment, as 1. The sweet Promises of the Covenant, may I not appeal to Believers, are not these Breasts of Consolation Soul-fatning? The Children of the bond Woman suck the Breasts of the Law, but these of the free Woman suck the Breasts of the Gospel, in which more of the Love of God runs than in the former. The more ye suck, the more stately and lively ye will be. The Difference among Christians, that some are more weak, some stronger, rises from this, some feed more liberally, some more sparingly by Faith on the Promises; if ye grow not, it is because ye feed not. 2ly, Under the Rod he feeds his People with precious Christ, this is the choicest of all Dishes: He is the Breeder and Feeder of spiritual Life, and therefore called the Bread of Life, John 6. 48. because both the Begetter and Nourisher of it, the Soul feeds on Christ, 1. In the Word, this is their Meal in Ordinary, without it they cannot thrive. 2. In the Sacraments, this is their Meal Extraordinary, every Day is not a Feast Day with them. Since the Lord feeds his People under and by the Rod in such an excellent Manner, may not this ballance the Tossing and Trouble thereof?

Fourth Fruit of Righteousness produced by sanctified Trials, is, Spiritual Cheerfulness and Joy of Heart, Acts 5. 41. *They departed from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name*. This their Joy proceeds, 1. From their tender Regard to their Master's Glory, he being Glorified, they cannot but Rejoice; Yea, this makes them take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, Heb. 10. 34. and not love their lives to the death, Rev. 12. 11. 2. From his Tenderness to them under their Trials, *When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee*; He breaks a Box of sweet Ointment, and dips their Cross in it, he makes them sit down under his shadow with great delight, and find his fruit sweet to their taste. 3. From the Faith of their Crosses and Trials, *Working for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. My Cross is heavy, my Trial

Trial is beyond all Parallel, it has so many sad Ingredients, my Heart is overcharged. *I sink among deep mire*, says Sense: But our cries Faith, O man, get up to mount Pisga, and look through my Eyes, and see the Land of Glory afar off, the Crown Immortal, and the King in his Beauty; And it is but a small Moment till thou shalt enter into the Joy of thy Lord, and Sin, Sorrow, and Sighing shall flee away. On this the Soul gets its Feet set on a Rock, and a new Song put in its Mouth, and is filled with Joy and Peace in Believing. Lo here is a noble Joy in its Nature, it is Spiritual, the Seat of it is in the Heart, the Measure of it is Satisfying, and the Duration of it is Constant and Permanent, your Joy no Man takes from you, John 16. 22. Losses, Crosses, Afflictions, Poverty, Prisons, or Persecutions, cannot rob the Believer of this Joy. Faith makes you Rejoice in Tribulation, Exult in Bonds, when Paul and Silas were in the Stocks, their Hearts were in Heaven, sending up and sounding forth Songs of Praise, as Sufferings abound, Consolations did Super-abound. Faith under Trials presents these Grounds of Rejoicing, 1. Electing Love, Luke 10. 20. Rejoice (says Christ) because your names are written in Heaven. 2. Their Redemption is accomplished by Christ, when the Apostle had but dropped a word of it, it set him a Singing and Rejoicing, Revel. 1. 5. To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Verse 6. And made us kings and priests to God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen. 3. Their Justification, Revel. 5. 1, 3. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and not only so, but we glory in tribulations. 4. Their Sanctification, Song 4. 16. Chap. 5. 1. When Spices flow out, when Graces do flourish, then follows a Feast of Joy and Solace, and hearty Welcome to it. 5. The Promises and Hopes of Glorification, Psal. 16. 9. My Heart is glad, and my Glory rejoiceth, whence is this, v. 11. Thou wilt shew me the Path of Life, in thy Presence is Fulness of Joy, at thy right Hand Pleasures for evermore. Psal. 17. 15. As for me, when I awake I shall behold thy Face in Righteousness, I shall be satisfied with thy Likeness. Now lay these Fruits of Righteousness together, and see if they do not ballance, yea swallow up the Sorrow and Trouble of Crosses and Trials.

A fifth Fruit of Righteousness is Victory and Conquest of predominant Idols, Afflictions when sanctified drain the Heart of these, make them tasteless, yea loathsome to the Soul, Psal. 6. 8. Depart from me all ye workers of Iniquity, for God hath heard the voice of my weeping. If it be asked, How do sanctified Afflictions produce this Fruit? Answer 1. By putting the Man on the Exercise of secret Prayer, James 5. 13. Is any afflicted, let him pray. Then the Soul will Pray frequently, 2 Cor. 12. 7, 8. and fervently with groans and sighs that cannot be uttered. 2. By setting him on Watch against them, the Gall and Wormwood they now feed on as the Effect of beloved Lusts, makes them with David, keep themselves from their Iniquity, Psal. 18. 23. O what Painfulness is in this Work. 3. By setting within their View the Love of Christ in his Death and Sufferings for us, which as it is a great Cordial under Afflictions, so it is a notable Mean to refrain from, and notably subdue Predominants, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. The Love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again. 4. By drawing Faith to lively Exercise, 1 John 5. 4. This is the Victory whereby we overcome the World, even our Faith, Eph. 6. 16. Above all, taking the shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked. 5. By making the Soul tender and accurate in Walk and Practice, resisting Snare, as Joseph, Gen. 39. 9. How then can I do this great Wickedness, and Sin against God. 6. By keeping up lively Apprehensions of Death, Judgment and Eternity, it was

was a noble and heroick Expression of one that shined bright in his Day, *I think (says he) a Christian never walks as he ought, till he walk so, as if each Moment next to that wherein he lives he had the Expectation of appearing before the Judgment Seat of Christ.*

If it be yet asked, How may I know if my Predominants be conquered? *Answer 1.* If thou be admitted to read thy Name in the Records of Heaven, if thou have got the white Stone and the new Name, *Rev. 2. 17.* which the Lord promiseth to encourage his Followers to endure the Fight the better. 2. If they have no Power to disturb you in holy Duties, but they are so far dispossest, that ye do them with more divine Serenity and Composure, which these who are under the Power of beloved Sin cannot do, *Ezek. 33. 31.* 3. If ye be much in exalting and extolling Praise-worthy Christ, this was an Evidence of Paul's Victory, *Rom. 7. 25.* *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, so then with the Mind I my self serve the Law of God, but with the Flesh the Law of Sin;* *1 Cor. 15. 56, 57.* *Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ, that groweth in the Victory.* 4. If the greater Discovery ye have of your Corruptions, ye be more unwearied in wrestling and fighting against them. 5. If the remembring of former Lusts do not provoke Desires after these things again, but the Exercise of Sorrow and heart Affliction that ever ye should have been under the Dominion of them. But it is quite contrair with the greater Part of the World, 1. They embrace their Idols after frequent Convictions of the Disadvantages of them, *Jer. 50. 38.* *They are mad upon their Idols.* 2. They embrace them on small Temptations, as *2 Sam. 11. 2, 3.* 3. They expose themselves to the greatest Toil to satisfy their Lusts, when it is more easie to mortifie than satisfy them. 4. When they can commit Sin with Pleasure and Delight, *2 Pet. 2. 13.* *They count it pleasure to riot in the day time.* *Eph. 4. 19.* *They give themselves to lasciviousness to work wickedness with greediness.* O that such may Repent and Turn, before Wrath come upon them without Remedy. Now from what hath been said appears the Advantage of these Fruits of Righteousness that follow Afflictions, which more than ballanceth all the Toil of them, all that can be Matter of Grief or Sorrow in them. I proceed to

Observe 2. *That whoever would experience and feel these Fruits of Righteousness, following Afflictions and Trials, must be kindly and tenderly exercised thereby.* They are the Fruit of kindly Heart Exercise under Rods and Afflictions.

In opening this Note, I will shew, *First*, What is the Nature of this Heart Exercise under the Rod. 2ly, About what things principally Believers are thus exercised.

First, I am to enquire what is the Nature of this Heart Exercise under the Rod. To understand this, it is necessar we consider, 1. That as Man by Nature is plunged into an Abyss of Misery, so he is utterly unsensible thereof, lying like a dead Man buried in a Grave of Sin and Misery, no way exercised about it. 2. Thus he continues till an Earthquake be raised in the Conscience, or warming drawing Influences be shewred down on the Affections, whereby carnal Subterfuges of a carnal false unsound Hope are shaken and overturned. 3. That so soon as Man is stript Naked of these, he is left open to the scorching Terrors of Wrath and Justice; which being felt, lets him on Work and Exercise, *What shall I do to be saved?* 4. This his Exercise is yet much intermixed with Indistinctness, Confusion and Terror, till the Gospel proclaims, *Peace on Earth, and good Will to Men,* and sounds out a Treaty of Peace on easie Terms, to be concluded betwixt God and Rebels. Whereupon, 5. His Exercise comes to be how to bring up his Heart to a cordial Compliance with Gospel Terms, and thereon to a solemn Resignation to God. 6. After this his Exercise is not at an end, it consists in

Working

Walking in the Light of the Word, and Treading in his various Interchanges of
Cases and States of Life, and Learning to be patient under inward Distresses, or out-
ward Troubles. *First*, His inward Distresses are either, 1. Doubt about the Latent
 in Christ. 2. Temptation from Satan, the Flesh, and the World. 3. Dejection when
 God hides his Face. 4. Delays in the Answer of Prayers, when, tho he Rose Day and
 Night, yet God hears him not. *Secondly*, Outward Troubles are either, 1. Persecutions
 are sensible of this, it puts them to serious Exercise, to guard against the same.
 2. Afflictive Dispensations, Rods and Chastisements, which in the particular Case is
 Hand. And this leads me

In the second Place, to enquire about what is it that Believers are principally exer-
 cised under Rods and Trials? *Answer*, It is about these four, *First*, The Rod is self-
Secondly, About the State of your Souls, how it stands betwixt God and you. *Thirdly*,
 About the present Disposition of your House. *Fourthly*, About the Hand that
 Strikes and Smites you.

First, Believers are exercised about the Chastisements themselves: As 1. This is a
 Piece of their Exercise, *Shew me, Lord, wherefore thou contendest with me*: They en-
 deavour to hear what is the particular Voice of the Rod, *Leviticus 6. 2*. And beside other
 Voices, I will tell thee three Things it readily carries in Commission to thee, which
 thou art to hear, and be lively exercised about; 1. Thou hast sinned, there is some
 golden Wedge in thy side, find out the *Achan*, cast down the *Jezabel*, throw over the
 Traitor. 2. God is displeased, he is resenting some Indignity done to his Glory, it is
 terrible to fall in his Hands while he is angry. *for, he is a consuming fire*. 3. Return
 and Repent, no other way remains to extinguish this incensed Anger, but by Tears
 of unfeigned Repentance, *Look on him whom ye have pierced and mourn*. 2ly, Another
 Piece of Exercise under the Rod is, to bear the Indignation of the Lord, What is heavier?
 Yet bear, 1. Patiently, *Leviticus 23. 32*. *Wherefore shall a living man complain, a man for the*
punishment of his sin? 2. Feelingly, being touched at the Heart therewith; so as to have
 Heart and Soul Work kept in Life. 3. Freely and Willingly, saying, as *Jeremiab*,
 Chap. 10. v. 24. *O Lord, correct me, but with judgment: me is thine anger, lest thou bring*
me to nothing. 3ly, Another Part of their Exercise under the Rod, lies in doing Work,
 1. Kiss the Rod in your Father's Hand, Honour it as his Scepter, Fear it as his Sword,
 and Love it as his Medicine. 2. Call away the Sin has procured it, *1st. 30. 22*.
Thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence: Hearken thou unto my Voice, have I to do any
more with idols? 3. Renew Covenant with God, by a solemn Renunciation of your
 selves to him, *Leviticus 26. 46*. *Ye shall say, God that be your God for ever, and ye will be for him and not for*
another.

Secondly, Believers under the Cross, are exercised about the State of their own Souls,
 how it stands betwixt God and them? And now, let me seriously ask you, my Hear-
 ers, *First*, Were ye ever sensible of your Natural State? Go ye such a View of it, as
 fired you out of your *regions of lies*, and made you cry, *Lead me from rock that is higher*
than I? 2ly, Did ye continue Believers, and receive Satisfaction, till landed at Christ,
 the End of the Law, for Righteousness? *How* came ye through the Power of the new
 Birth, while, as a Lion, he seemed to threaten to tear you. *Did ye yet a secret uphold-*
ing Hand, when your *law was almost lost*, by *sinners* led you on? 3ly, The ye cannot
 be so exact to tell how ye were chased and hunted to the City of Refuge, yet are
 things ye know, *whereas once ye were blind*, now ye see; a remarkable Change now, when
 compared

compared with what once ye were; these Duties that were once a Terror to you, are now Pleasant. *All the Ways of Wisdom are Pleasant, and do bring forth Peace, and the Fruit thereof is Righteousness.* *Psalm 119.* ye are fully Reconciled to the Yoke of Christ. *It is said,* that most Spiritual Duties that cross your carnal Hearts and Affections, ye are best pleased with them. *Ye esteem all his Commands concerning all things to be Right, if to the State seem secure, and thy Heart sound in his Statutes.*

Thirdly, Believers will be exercised about the present Disposition of their Heart under their Chastisements. 1. Exercised about Heart-thinking Work. *Psalm 7. 14.* *In the Day of Adversity consider, think what a God thou hast to do with, what a Wretch thou art, and how deserving of threatened Anger, and what lies at the Stroke and in Hazard.* 2. Be exercised about Heart-breaking Work. *Jerem. 4. 2.* *Hos. 10. 12.* *Be as doves in the valleys, each one mourning for his iniquity.* 3. Be exercised to get thy Heart to bow and yield willingly to the Lord, it is the Lord, should be enough to make thee willing to say, *Let him do so me as seemeth him good.*

Fourthly, Believers, be exercised about the hand that smites, *Isa. 24. 15.* *Glorify God in the furnace.* First, By Abasing your selves, *Job 42. 6.* 2ly, Vindicating the Lord's Procedure, *Jerem. 12. 1.* *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee.* 3ly, Yield Reverence, Fear and Obedience to him. 4ly, Go to God for a Blessing of the Rod, that it may yield the precious Fruit of Righteousness, that Men may come out of the Earth, and Succumb out of the Strong to thy Soul.

HEBREWS XII. Verse 12.

Wherefore lift up the Hands which hang down, and the feeble Knees.

THO some Interpreters, as *Purser* and others, make this Verse a Conclusion of the preceding Discourse, concerning Afflictions and Chastisements; Yet others, with whom we join, do with this Verse begin the second Part of the Chapter, which is the Application of the preceding Doctrine, ancient Sufferings and Afflictions: Which consists of three Parts, 1. A general Exhortation to Conform our Mind and Resolution to a Lot of Suffering, *Verse 12, 13.* 2ly, Several weightie and seasonable Duties enjoined to the same End, *Verses 14, 15, 16.* 3ly, A Confirmation of the Whole, by the Instance and Example of *Esa*, who did all things contrair, *Verse 16, 17.*

I begin with the first contained in my Text; In which consider, 1. The Text's Dependence on the former Doctrine in the preceding Verses, wherefore, since things are in this Case, as we have declared, this is your Duty, *Lift up the Hands which hang down.* 2. A Supposition of some Fainting and Failing in the Hebrews, as to their Courage and Constancy in Sufferings and Afflictions; Of this the Apostle as a faithful Minister admonisheth them. 3. An Exhortation to those who do thus Faint and Fail, *Lift up the*

Hands which are weak is taken from *Ihs 3:23* *Stronger than the weak hands will confess the feeble knees.* The Exhortation is proposed in a continual Chain of Metaphors; borrowed from *Commonplace*, *Remedy* used in the *Olympic Games*, and applied to the particular Parts of the Body, that were of principal Use on these Occasions. *Most Particularly*, Consider, First, The Defect that is blamed: Secondly, The Remedy that is prescribed to this Defect: Thirdly, The Spiritual Meaning of both. *First*, The Defect blamed on the Hands it is charged, they hang down, *capitulum*, we want a Word expressly to express the Import of the *Hebrew* used in *Ihs 3:23*; it signifies not so much to hang down, as to be weakened, and dissolved in strength, whereby they declare themselves Wearied, Faint, and ready to give over. The Defect charged on the knees, *genua*, *genua*, which we render feeble, their Vigour is dissolved, so in times of great Fear, the knees strike one against another, *Nahum 2:10*. So we have here described a Man that is Heartless and Slothful, so Faint in running a Race, as is ready to cast off all Hopes of Success. *Secondly*, The Remedy that is prescribed to cure this Defect, is one *anapausa*, *life*, *rest*, or make them straight, put about to their Duty; The Meladie that affects the several Parts being of the same Nature, the Remedy applyed is most suitable. *Thirdly*, The Meaning of both is, That since there is such a Decay of Christian Courage and Resolution, as is attended with Weakness and Weariedness in Duty in our Christian Race and Course, there being so much Despondency of Success, that the Man thinks he will never get it done; So much Weariness of Duty, that he is ready to quite and give it over; His Hands hang down, and his Knees are feeble. Therefore, it is our unquestioned Duty, to put forth our utmost Spiritual Strength, to have Grace kept in Exercise, and Duties performed with Diligence, that we may happily arrive at the End of our Christian Race and Course, however long or difficult it may be. Since our blessed Lord and Master hath given us, not only his Command, but sufficient Allowance and Encouragement, whences we may be provided against all Sinking and Despondency.

From this Text already Explained,

Observe 1. That the People of God are subject to Despondency and Weariness in their Christian Course.

Observe 2. That it is their incumbent Duty to be on their Guard against this desponding Disposition, and if Overaken by it, to recover themselves.

Observe 3. That there are rich Fonds whences the People of God may be abundantly provided against Despondency and Weariness, under Trials and Crosses: God's Design is their Good, and in the Event they shall all *work together* for this End.

I begin with Observe 1. That the People of God are subject to Despondency and Weariness in their Christian Course. *Elijah* cries, *I only am left*, *1 Kings 19:14*. *Joshua* is Disinayed, and needs to be Encouraged.

If it be enquired, How come Believers to be subject to Despondency and Weariness? Answer, In general, 1. From the Imperfection Grace labours under in this evil World. In this Out-field, this noble Plant cannot be expected to come to full Perfection. It is in Glory we behold God's Face in Righteousness, and are satisfied with his Likeness, *Phil. 17:2*. 2. From great Mistbelief, sometimes conquering and leading Captive the poor Believer, *Psal. 116:11*. *I said in my haste, all men are liars*, he entertained no further Hope, that what was promised should be performed, and it is sometimes so with serious Souls.

Sermon. 9. *Feares difficult heart and painful Task, which ever they be, are not*

inimicable Foes of Work, as they are usually to such and give over. *Answer* 1. *Particulars*, 1. *Said Objection* against such doubting the same. 2. *Powerful*

Temptations assaulting them, *like an Armed man*. 3. *Indifferent and revelling Conscience*

ours. These make Believers slow to duty, slow, and slow to good jobs. I fight with the First, and for your Encouragement, that I deliver a list of your Objections. *Objection 1*. Alas, my Friend, I have a thousand times with these Backslidings, what shall I do? It is then, I have

offer Payment, I have no Food, I will give over as I please, my Hand hang down, and my knees grow feeble, yet, I smite one against another, to think of my Answer. *Answer* 1. I shall a way to pay thy Debt, to sink and swim, without asking thy Eye about

for a Food whence thou may be answered. 2. Our glorious God hath provided sufficiently, whence in this thy Strait thou may be answered, in the Fountain of Christ's Blood, *Ephes. 1. 7. 1 John 1. 7*. And also hath made Satisfaction to thee, to what he

ther and freely share thereof, *Isa. 53. 1. Rev. 1. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.*

more innumerable thy Debts are, they lay the greater and the more forcible Obligation on thee to come to the rich Treasury provided and laid up for thy Supply, crying with David, *Pardon mine iniquity for it is great, Psal. 139. 131*. 4. If thou willingly and sincerely return to the Lord, whatever Guilt thou stands chargeable with, the Lord will

forgive and pass it; Bygones shall be Bygones, *Isa. 43. 18. Jer. 31. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.*

Objection 2. So vast is the Disproportion betwixt glorious Christ and me, I cannot think he will ever match with me. *Answer*, 1. *Thou who is sensible of thy own Unworthiness*, is the only Match he seeks, *Isaiah 130. 28. Psa. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200.*

and thine own people; so shall the King desire thy beauty, *Psal. 45. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.*

the Disproportion, yet he thinks it no Disparagement to suit his Father to thy Emptiness; and says to thee, *All thy manner be as me*. 2. Therefore Despond not, this will not hinder the Bargain. 3. See there be not some Poise in the Root of said Objection, if there be Ground for any Objection of this kind, I think it lets you well to let them

come from Christ's Side of the House: But ye think ye would give as good as ye get, at least something for it; Thy Ability and Qualifications press him this, that thinks to buy such a Prize.

Objection 3. I have long vowed to prepare a heart for the God of Jews, but all to this Day so many Lusts and Idols dwell with me, so that there is no Room for Christ, and now I lost Hope. *Answer* 1. The lively Sight and Sense of these Evils speaks out there is Hope; Therefore lift up the Hands which hang down, and the feeble Knees. 2. The Lord

allows you to put this Work in his own Hand, to prepare Room for himself. 3. For thy Encouragement, he has promised thee Welcome, and assured thee of Success, *John 17. 18. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the Truth.*

Objection fourth, I seemed once admitted to some Nourishment, and got sweet Incomes, but now all is gone from me, I am within Sight of no Ground of Comfort, and I am filled with Blushing how to return again to him with whom I dealt so unkindly; therefore my Hands hang down, and my knees are feeble. *Answer* 1. Your Backslidings are the more unreasonable and unaccountable that ye have walked so unlike the Mercy ye enjoyed. 2. Not to be speedy in returning, is to avouch and vindicate your former declining. 3. In order to your Return, Remember from whence ye have fallen, be sensible that it is an evil and bitter thing to forsake the Lord. 4. For

For you that are new, know there is Food enough in Christ to stock Bankrupt Sinners of new, to the last of Verse 12. and it is easily to be had, *Isa. 55. 1.* How sweet are his invitations to Bankrupt Backslidden Sinners to return? How sweet are his Promises of pardoning and sanctifying Grace, upon their Returning and Repentance? *Jer. 31. 1. 2. 23. 24. 27. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.*

Objection 1. I am very jealous if he will give any of it to me, I shall have nothing left for myself, and I shall receive no further care for him nor his Family. *Answer 1.* Thou hast his Word and Faithfulness engaged, that whatever thy Need shall be, it shall be met, *Gen. 2. 18. 25.* As there is Fidelity in him, so there is sweet goodness tending Love to engage him to communicate the same to thee, a giving, forgiving, sympathizing, and a divine Love, which makes this Love admirably beyond other Loves of Creatures.

Objection 2. I cannot believe his Love to be such, it would suppart me, but I cannot believe it. *Answer 1.* Ye cannot believe, therefore it is not true; is this good Reasoning, especially when ye have to do with an All-sufficient God? *2.* To help thee to believe, take a View of the near and sweet Relations he comes under to thee, he is a Friend, a Father, a Brother and Husband to the Believer, look on the refreshing Promises of his blessed Word, on the Influences of his gracious Spirit, on the Expressions of his Love that are often found.

Objection 3. Alas, since I have fallen from my wonted Tenderness, I have drawn on great Guilt, and I cannot win to Repentance and Humiliation, this makes my Case hopeless, this makes my Hands hang down, and my Knees be feeble. *Answer 1.* True it is, that renewed Guilt calls aloud for renewed Repentance, the Soul that turns not shall die. *2.* It is as true it is none of our working, but the alone Product of the exceeding great and mighty Power of God. Yet, *3.* Know for thy Encouragement, it is of his giving, and this is the End of his Exhortation, *to give Repentance to Israel, and Forgiveness of Sin, Acts 3. 21.*

Objection 4. I do oft engage, and as oft broke to Christ, I fear to do it again, will only incur more Guilt. *Answer 1.* It was thy Duty to engage, but thy Sin to break. *2.* Thy engaging was not the Cause of thy breaking, but thy unfuitable walking to the Terms of thy Engagement; therefore, *3.* It is a last Cure of thy present Malady, to think to engage no more; but the proper Cure is, *4.* Renew Covenant with God, and set up a Watch against what formerly separates between God and thy Soul. And to encourage thee, if thou be serious, he will undertake for thy Part of the Covenant as well as for his own, *Jer. 32. 40. I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, so do them good. So all is sure and secure on God's Part, but what more? And I will put my fear in their Hearts, that they shall not depart from me, and I will require of them to do them good—with my whole Heart, and my whole Soul. Therefore lift up the Hands that hang down, and the feeble Knees.*

The second thing that influenceth hanging down of Hands and Feebleness of Knees, is Dependancy in our Christian Course, is powerful Temptations assaulting the Man, these are the fiery Darts which Satan shoots against the Soul, to entice us in our Christian Course; as *1.* I have never been humbled enough for Sin, I am quite a Stranger to a serious Day Work; thus Satan terrifies the Soul, while in the mean time Sin is discovered very terrible, and the Man like to sink under it. Therefore for your Encouragement, *2.* Examine if thou hast attained the true End of Humiliation; if this be gained, despond not for want of particular Degrees and Measures of Humiliation.

One great End of this humbling Work is, that the Soul may be brought to loath and leave Sin, *Job 42. 6. I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* *Eial. 119. 104. I hate every false way.* If this Hatred be such as God will approve, then the Heart will hate that Sin which easily prevailed before, and will walk contrary to it; what is wanting in the Measure of Grief, will be made up in real Fear lest Sin prevail. This Hatred and Fear makes the Soul watchful against Sin, and lays the Foundation for solid inward Peace. A second End of Humiliation is to be made willing to receive Christ on the Terms he offers himself in the Gospel; this was the Result of the Humiliation of the Converts mentioned, *Acts Chap. 2. 37. Chap. 9. 5. 6. Chap. 16. 29. 30. 31.* If this be gained, *lift up the Hands that hang down.* A third End is, to render Christ amiable and lovely, more sweet than all created Satisfaction, than thousands of Idols. O that I had the Bread of Life to eat, and Water of Life to drink, for I begged my Bread, and wanted Water all the Days of my Life. A second Answer to this Temptation, see ye mistake not the Point, look to the length and breadth, as well as to the Depth of the Affliction, the Trial of others may be deeper while it lasts, but mine longer in Continuance: Look also to the inside as well as the outside, tho' thou want such Floods of Tears, yet may have inward Pangs of Sorrow: the Seat of Humiliation is the Heart, not the Eye. Answer third, Ye who groan under this Temptation, I advise you look more to the Covenant of Grace; in the Nature thereof Devils comforted themselves in the like Case, *2 Sam. 23. 5. It is everlasting, ordered in all things and firm.*

X A second Temptation, may some complain, I have no Hope, I am so vile and worthless, I have no Warrant to believe on Christ. Answer first, God hath Grace enough to make thee comely, beware of strait and scant Thoughts of rich and incomprehensible Grace, *Eph. 3. 18. 19. What is the breadth and length, and depth, and height of the Love of Christ which passeth Knowledge; it is higher than Heaven, it reaches thither, and carries Souls to Abraham's Bosom, it is deeper than Hell, it delivers from the Pit, its breadth reaches the whole Elect World, Jews and Gentiles, its length is from Eternity to Eternity.* 2ly, There is as much Will as Power in God to save thee, if thou wilt believe on him, were thou never so Unworthy in thy self, *Isa. 1. 18. Though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow.* *Matth. 12. 31. All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men.* *Ezek. 36. 25. From all your Filthiness and your Idols will I cleanse you.* 3ly, He hath not only Will enough, but he also earnestly desires to save the most unworthy Soul, as is evident, 1. From his Word, *Ezek. 16. 6. I said unto thee when thou wast in thy Blood, Live.* 2. By his Oath, *Ezek. 33. 11. As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.* 3. From his Reasonings with you, *Ezek. 33. 11. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?* 4. The Lord appeals to the Creatures, yea makes your selves Judges against your selves, that he doth every thing can be done for your Conversion, *Micah 6. 1, 2. Isa. 5. 3, 4. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my Vineyard; What could I have done more to my Vineyard that I have not done to it?* 5. From his longing Wishes for your Happiness, *Deut. 5. 29. O that there were such a Heart in them, that they would fear me,* *Chap. 32. 29. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.* 6. It is uneasy to him to destroy them, *Hosea 11. 8. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine Heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.* 7. He weeps over an impenitent Generation, *Matth. 23. 37. Mark 3. 5. Luke 19. 40, 41. When he came near the City, (Jerusalem)*

(*Jerusalem*) *thou wast ever in a Spring, if thou hadst known, thou hadst not left in this thy Day the things that belong to thy Peace & have now they are hid from thine Eyes.* 38. See the Quintessence of Glory, having the Heavens and coming down, and laying aside his Robes of Majesty, and that he may save Sinners, crying at the Market Place, Ob if any Sinner love Life and Happiness, if any will come to Heaven, let them come to me, and I will conduct them! 9. See him dying, hanging on the Cross, dropping out his last Blood, breathing out his last Breath, and stretching out his dying Arms to embrace worthless Wretches. *Fourthly*, Consider, the Depth of infinite Grace hath never yet been sounded, *Revel.* 11. 23. 10. There is thy Hope, be thou as vile as thou can, *Lift up* *thou the Hands which hang down.* 11. 29. There is a good Reason for thee to Hope, as for any of the Saints, what was in them before Conversion, nothing deserving God's Favour, *1st Cor.* 13. 2. *even I am he that blaspheem thy Transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy Sins.* 6. 12. The greater thy Vileness, so much more shall God attain his noble Ends in saving thy Soul: All the World shall see the Power of his Mercy, that he can wash such a vile Sinner as thou art. Such will the more study to glorify him afterward in their Walk and Conversation, as *Luke* 7. 47. *She loved much, because much was forgiven her.* 2. And others by thy Example shall be kept from Despair, and encouraged to believe on Christ who pardons and accepts the greatest Sinners, *1 Tim.* 1. 15. 16. *Psal.* 34. 5. 6. I proceed to Answer and Remove

A third Temptation, I fear I am none of the Elect, and so I have no Hope of being saved, this makes my *Hands hang down.* *Answer* 1. *Secret things belong to God, revealed things to us, the Promises of the Gospel are the Object of thy Faith, and clearly proposed to thee in the Scripture.* *1st Cor.* 13. 2. 3. 7. *1st John* 11. 28. *John* Chap. 3. 16. Chap. 6. 29. 2. The way to know thy Election is, to make sure thy effectual Calling, *Rom.* 8. 28, 29. 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. Wherefore, Brethren, give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure. If the Lord hath determined thy Heart willingly to embrace Christ for Salvation, then be persuaded God, by this, discovers the secret Purposes of Love he had to thee from all Eternity. 3. There is no Ground for thee to think thou art not Elected, but thy Unbelief, *Whoever believes in Christ shall not perish, but have eternal Life,* *John* 3. 16. *Whoever comes to him shall not be cast out,* *John* 6. 37. 4. Whom God hath Elected he hath not only Elected to the End, but also to the Means, *Eph.* 1. 12. therefore find out your Election by your Conversion. 5. If a Person should Reason and Act so in things of meaner Concern, would he not be his own Barrier? I know not but this Day, or in a few Days I am appointed to die, I need therefore neither eat, drink nor sleep: Art thou not then afraid, lest hearkning to this Temptation, I am not Elected, thou murders thy own Soul? 6. Art Heaven and Glory so petty things, that they are not worthy the venturing for, if thou have but a Probability for them, tho' not a Certainty. Thou says, I am not sure I am Elected, I say, *Believe, Man, and thou shalt be sure, thou hast the Word of God for it.*

A fourth Temptation that makes the Saints *Hands hang down*, and their *Knees be feeble* is this, I fear I sinned against the Holy Ghost, which shall never be forgiven? Now, the Devil having to do with credulous Souls, that are ready to believe evil than good of themselves, gets the fullest Blame given them by such a fiery Dart. *Answer* 1. That there is such a Sin is a Truth, *Matth.* 12. 31. But, 2. The Elect cannot commit this Sin, Christ gives them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, *2 Tim.* 2. 19. *The Foundation of God standeth sure.* *1 Pet.* 1. 5. They are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation. *John* 3. 9. *Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin.* But Particularly, Consider,

sider, First, It is very uncertain what this Sin is; so various are the Descriptions of it by School-men, as *Augustine, Cassian, Belling, and Bernard*, scarce two of them of the same Opinion concerning it. 2^{dly}, None can be guilty of it, but such as have been enlightened with a good Measure of the Knowledge of God's Truth. *Heb. 6. 4.* *who have tasted of the good Word of God, and received it with joy, and tasted the heavenly Gift, giving an Assent unto the Truths of the Word.* 3^{dly}, This must be a settled Sin of their own, continued in without Repentance, not a mere Suggestion of Satan, which may surpris the best of Believers.

Foribly, In this Sin there is not only a simple Denial of the Truth, but further 1. Blasphemy. 2. Opposition to the Truth. 3. A wilful, free, and voluntary Denial not extorted by Fear. 4. From Venom and Malice of Heart, to reproach and discredit the Truths of God. 5. A constant Denial, the word *apostate* was rendered, *if they fall away*, *Heb. 6. 6.* signifies, *Fall away in Shakes like an old rotten House, not well as first put together.*

Foribly, It is not probable thou art guilty of this Sin, and none but thy self complain of it, it usually breaks out in prodigium. As *Dr. Williams* saith, *It is no Chamber or Closet Sin, it roars and blasphemes Christ, and persecutes the Saints with Fire and Sword, as Julian the Apostate.* In a word, this Sin is, When a Man that hath been enlightened by the Spirit of God, with Fundamental Gospel Truths, distinctly and clearly, with Knowledge and Deliberation, directly, freely, wilfully, openly, maliciously and blasphemously, without any Provocation, but the corrupt Wickedness of his own Heart, reviles the Credit of the Truths of God among others, and out of Malice to God, blasphemes the Truth itself, because it is true, with blasphemy, revile and persecute those who profess it, and trample on the Blood of Christ. Now Soul, did thou ever any of these things? Mistake not thy self, be humble for thy Sins, but transgress not by Despair without Cause. For,

Sixthly, If thy Sin be a Trouble and Grief to thee, if thou be willing to be obliged to Christ for Pardon, thou art not Guilty of this Sin; for such as are Guilty of it refuse to Repent, *Heb. 6. 6.*

Now take these as a Swatch of Satan's Temptations, and no wonder Believers Hands hang down, and their Knees be feeble when so attacked; especially if we consider what an Adversary he is, 1. Mighty, *Eph. 6. 12.* *We wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities and Powers.* 2. Malicious, *Going about as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour,* 1 *Pet. 5. 8.* 3. Confucial, assiduous and indefatigable, he hath nothing else to do, but lie at the Catch. 4. Most subtle in managing all his Snare, but of his Cunningness I have spoke on Verses 3.

The third thing that influences Despondency, is continual Conflict with a Body of Sin and predominant Idols, and more especially, 1. A Sight of the horrid and detestable Nature of Sin in the Filthiness and exceeding Sinfulness thereof, *Rom. 7. 5.* 2. The Universality of its Depravation, polluting all the Faculties and Powers of the Soul, and all the Organs of the Body. 3. The continual and incessant Rising of Sin, when one is cut off like *Hyas's* Head, there start up many more. 4. The strong Force and Violence by which Lusts attack the Soul, like mad and enraged Men. 5. The Defeat Saints sometimes receive, *Psal. 65. 3.* *Iniquities prevail against me,* says David, this makes the Lord's Friends sometimes afraid lest they never recover, but sink eternally, therefore they are weary with their Groaning, and wear their Countenances with their Tears, their Hands hang down, and their Knees are feeble.

Observe

Hebrews XII. Verse 12.

177

Observe 2. That it is the Duty of the People of God to be on their Guard against this desponding Disposition, and recover themselves from it.

I shall First, Prove the Truth of this Doctrine. Secondly, Shew what the People of God should do, to prevent Despondency, and recover themselves out of it.

As for the First, That it is the Duty of the People of God, to be on their Guard against this desponding Disposition, and recover themselves from it, appears, 1. From God's express Command in the Text, *Wherefore lift up the Hands which hang down*, and in verse third, *Consider him that endured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your Mind.* 2ly, The most Eminent Saints in Scripture, are at great Pains to recover themselves from these sinking discouraging Fears, *Psal. 42. 5, 6, 11. Psal. 43. 5. Why art thou cast down, O my Soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the Health of my Countenance, and my God.* 3ly, The Lord dissuades his People from this Heartless Despondency, *John 14. 1. Let not your Hearts be troubled.* *Isa. 43. 1. Fear not, for I have redeemed thee.* 4ly, The best of Saints may be very far overcome by discouraging Fears, when they are not guarded against, and seasonably opposed, as *Asaph*, when he envied at the foolish, and grieved at the Prosperity of the wicked, and said, *I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency, Psal. 73. 3, 13. And when in Psalm 77. 7, 8. he says, Will the Lord cast off for ever, will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone? hath his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercy?* Thus *David Psal. 116. 11. Said in his haste, All men are liars.* *Heman* was distracted with Terrors, and ye may further read how low the Saints were brought by these sinking Fears in *Psal. 102. Psal. 88. Psal. 42. Lament. Chap. 1.* and other Scriptures. 5ly, These desponding sinking Fears, when not opposed, are very sinful, they dishonour God, bring up a bad Report of Religion, as if God were a bad Master, who hungred and pinched his Servants, which renders them so discouraged, and this frightens Strangers from engaging in his Service. 6ly, *Lift up your Hands which hang down*, O Saints, for the Lord allows, yea, commands you to Rejoice, *Psal. 33. 1. Phil. 3. 3. Chap. 4. v. 4. Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.* He hath commanded his Servants to comfort you, *Isa. 40. 1. and it is his own Commission to comfort them that mourn, Isa. 61. 3.* 7ly, None in the World have so great Ground to be Cheerful as you, *1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. All are yours, and ye are Christs.* Your Master hath not left you comfortless Orphans, *John 14. 18. He will never leave you, nor forsake you, Heb. 13. 5. He will make all things work together for your good, Rom. 8. 28.* — What a Shame is it then, for you to look discouraged in his Service, *Lift up your Hands which hang down*, and serve him Cheerfully while ye have a Being.

Secondly, If it be asked, What shall a Saint do to prevent Despondency, and recover himself out of it? For Answer, I give these following Directions.

First, Secure Peace with God, and then, *being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and not only so, but we glory in Tribulations, Rom. 5. 1, 2, 3.*

2ly, Get Love to Christ in lively Exercise, this will carry your Head above the Waters of *Marah*; This made *Paul* willing not only to be bound, but to die at *Jerusalem*: The Love of Christ is of a mighty constraining Force, *2 Cor. 5. 14.*

3ly, Be much in the Exercise of Self-denial, it is self that is crossed and pinched by Trials. After which follows Uneasiness, and then Despondency, Christ and Self in your Trials, come in Competition, so that either Christ or Self must be denied: Deny therefore

therefore Conceit of your own Accomplishments or Enjoyments, if this be not done ye will think your selves too good to suffer for Christ. Deny your own Judgment and Wisdom; If ye consult with *Flesh and Blood*, it is the high way to Despond, and make you too wise to suffer for Christ. Deny your Carnal Reasonings; Ye will soon reason your selves out of Courage to ~~act~~ and suffer for Christ, as too small a Matter to lose your Estates for, or to run the Hazard of Banishment, Imprisonment and Death. Deny your own Will, say, *not my Will but thine be done*; This will keep from Despondency, when ye are willing to submit to whatever God calls you to. And Finally, Be denied to the World; Get your Mind and Affections disingaged, and your Heart loosed more and more from it; If Carnal Ease and Contentments be Over-valued, then farewell Christ and Religion, with *Demas* ye will forsake him for *love of the present world*, 2 Tim. 4. 10.

4ly, Reflect and consider how much God hath done for thee formerly: Hath he not brought thee out of a State of Nature? Cast his Eye of Love and Pity upon thee, when thou as a wretched Infant, was cast out in a most miserable Condition? And, hath he not entred in a covenant Relation with thee? Ezek. 16. 6 — 8: Hath he not given thee a Discovery of his Grace and Beauty, and made his Goodness pass before thee? Exod. 34. 6; 7. Hath he not helped thee to Pray, and sometimes heard thy Prayers and Tears? Hath he not brought thee sometimes into the Banqueting-house, and made his Banner over thee to be Love? Hath he not delivered thee formerly out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and put a new song in thy mouth? And made thee resolve, I shall never again yield to such discouraging Doubts? What a Shame is it then for thy Hands to hang down, and thy Knees to be feeble? Should such a Man as thou fear? Up and serve thy Master Cheerfully.

5ly, Look what Sins have provoked God to leave thee under these discouraging Fears; May be thou hast refused Christ's Call, slighted Duty, entertained some secret Idol; Look out the *Achan*, the *accursed thing*, for which the Lord is contending; mourn over it, and strive to death.

6ly, Pour out your Hearts to God in serious Prayer, plead the Promises, and look for supporting, strengthening and comforting Grace.

7ly, May there not be some Mistakes in your Case? Thou doubts if thy Grace be Sincere, because Hypocrites go a great Length; But they cannot hate all Sin as Sin, be willing to be searched and tried of the Lord, embrace Christ for Righteousness and Strength. Thou complains of Hardness of Heart, but there is a great Difference betwixt Hardness that thou mourns over, and feels as thy Burden, and a stupid, judicially hardened Soul, that is unconcerned with the Plagues of its own Heart. Thou complains thou cannot Pray, but there are Times of Straitning, and Times of Enlargement; And tho' the Lord *hide his face for a little moment*, yet with everlasting kindness will be have mercy upon thee, Isa. 54. 8.

8ly, Acquaint your selves more with God, get your Souls filled with effectual Apprehensions of his Greatness and Goodness, with the Thoughts of what he is in himself, and what he is to his People; This enduring a seeing of him who is invisible, kept Moses from fainting, Heb. 11. 27. Consider therefore, 1. His All-sufficiency, there is enough in him to make up all ye can lose for him; as well doubt, if there be Heat in the Fire, Light in the Sun, as that Divine Fulness cannot be enough to you, tho' nothing be less in the World. 2. Look much to God's Power, able to support you under all Trials.

Ephes.

Ephes. 3. 20. 3. His Goodness that makes him willing to do whatever his All-sufficiency and Power can afford and effectuate.

9ly, Furnish your selves with more Spiritual Strength for enduring Trials, not only habitual but actual Strength, which consists in the present Exercise of Grace; and look much for your Auxiliary Supplies of the Divine Influences of the Grace of God, *Ephes. 6. 10.* This may keep your Hands from hanging down, your Knees from being feeble, and your Souls from fainting.

Lastly, Endeavour to have Faith in lively Exercise, then ye shall not need to Despond, but Persevere to the End, and be Saved: But of this Grace we spoke on Verse third.

I proceed now to Observe 3d. That there are rich Fonds whence the People of God may be abundantly provided, against their sinking and desponding in their Christian Course, under whatever Trials. As,

First, The Store-house whence all these is to be had, is the Mediator Christ; His Offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King, are exactly suited for supplying all the Believer's Necessities and Wants; His Relations, as a Father, a Friend, a Brother, a Husband, a Physician, a Saviour, are fraughted full of Love; There is nothing wanting in him to make his People Happy: Wherefore then should their Hands hang down, and their Knees be feeble?

A second rich Fond for keeping from Despondency under Difficulties, is the certain and infallible Continuance of the Love and Favour of God to his chosen People, who have embraced the blessed Jesus. The Foundation of this, is by the Sacred Scripture laid on these five solid Pillars. First, On the Unchangeableness of God's Nature, *Mal. 3. 6.* I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed: These Sons of Jacob, are the Sons of the Faith of Jacob, the true Israel of God. 2ly, Upon the Immutability of his Purposes, for carrying his Elect safe to Glory: These his Purposes are the Internal Acts of his Will, concerning all things tending to bring about the Salvation of the Elect World. Now, that these are Unchangeable, is evident. 1. From his absolute Sovereignty in making and executing all his Purposes, which will not admit of any such Consults or Cooperation of others, as should render them liable to any Alteration, *Rom. 11. 34. 35. 36.* 2. From their Eternity, this exempts them from all Shadow of Change, for that which is Eternal is also Immutable. 3. From the Independency of his Will, wherof they are the Acts and Emanations, *Rom. 9. 15.* I will have Mercy on whom I will have mercy. Whatever hath any Influence on his Will, so as to move, cause, or change it, must be before it, above it, or better than it, as every Cause is better than its Effect: But to conceive this of the Divine Will, is most absurd and blasphemous. 4. His Omnipotency, is engaged for the Accomplishing all his Purposes and Designs, *Isa. 14. 29.*

3ly, The infallible Continuance of God's Love to his People, is founded on the Stability, Firmness and Inviolable Nature of the well ordered Covenant of Grace, *Gen. 17. 7.* I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting Covenant. Tho' the external Administration of the Covenant was given only to Abraham and his Carnal Seed, yet the effectual Dispensation of the Grace of the Covenant, is peculiar to them only who are the Children of the Promise, according to the Election.

4ly, The Unchangeableness of his Love is founded on the Sureness of the Promises, which are all Branches streaming from the Fountain of the Covenant of Grace; For God who cannot lie, hath made them, and his Truth and Faithfulness is engaged to

to accomplish them: And this is the Ground of their Stability and Firmness, Heb. 6. 18. Titus 1. 2.

Firstly, The Indwelling of the holy Spirit secures Believers from all Danger of falling away; If we can prove that the Believers Soul is the Residence of the holy Spirit, then they may lift up their Hands which hang down, and the feeble Knees; And it may be proven, 1. From the Promises of his Dwelling in them, Ezek. 36. 27. I will put my Spirit within you, in your inward parts, in the heart. Luke 11. 13. Your heavenly Father giveth the holy Spirit to them that ask him. 2. From positive Assertions, Rom. 8. 9. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Verse 15. But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 1 Cor. 2. 12. We have received the Spirit which is of God; that we may know the things that are freely given us of God. Galat. 4. 6. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 3. This Gift of the holy Spirit is distinguished from all other Gifts and Graces bestowed upon Believers, Rom. 5. 5. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghost which is given unto us. Here the Spirit is distinguished from the Love of God, which is the Grace he sheds abroad in Believers Hearts. Rom. 8. 11. He shall quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit which dwells in you. 4. There is a Personality ascribed to the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, and that in such a Way as cannot be ascribed to any created Grace, which is but a Quality in a Subject. For 1. There are Personal Appellations ascribed to the Indwelling of the holy Spirit in Believers, John 14. 16, 17. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth in you, and shall be in you. John 16. 13. When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that he shall speak. These are Expressions that cannot be applied to any Grace or gracious Habit whatsoever, but peculiarly denote the Personality of the blessed Spirit. 2. Personal Operations are ascribed to the blessed Spirit which dwells in Believers, as Rom. 8. 11. To quicken. Verse 15. To become a Spirit of adoption. Verse 16. To bear witness with our Spirits. 3. Such Circumstances are ascribed to him in his Indwelling, as are proper only to a Person, 1 Cor. 3. 16. Ye are the Temple of God, and his Spirit dwelleth in you. Chap. 6. v. 19. Your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost. Nothing can make a Place a Temple, but the Relation it hath to a Deity. Graces that are but Qualifications of, and Qualities in a Subject, cannot be said to dwell in a Temple. Now, since ye have an Interest in the blessed Jesus Believers, and his Spirit dwelling in you, whatever be your Difficulties, Crosses, Doubts, or Fears, Lift up the Hands which hang down, and the feeble Knees. There is no Ground for Despondency or Discouragement, but great Reason for serving God Cheerfully, while ye have a Being.

HEBREWS

HEBREWS XII. Verse 13.

And make straight Paths for your Feet, lest that which is Lame be turned out of the Way, but let it rather be Healed.

THE Exhortation in the former Verse concerns the inward Frame of the Mind of Men, with Respect to themselves and their own Souls. This Verse we have now read, looks to their Way, Walk and Conversation, that it may be *Straight*, and that others may receive no Damage but Benefit by it; So this Duty is Additional to the former, as the conjunctive Particle *and*, also imports. In the Words the Apostle continues to use the Metaphor borrowed from Runners in a Race, who, as they do prepare their Body to run Nimbly and Speedily, so they are careful to keep the right Way; the Direction seems to be taken from Prov. 4. 26. *Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.* The whole Text contains *First*, A Duty prescribed, *Make straight paths for your feet.* *Secondly*, A Motive pressing the Duty from the Danger of its Omission, *Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way.* For understanding aright the Duty prescribed, Consider 1. What are the paths of our feet; Our Feet then are Members of our Body, which carry us on in our Course, and by them is signified the Ability and Vigour of our Minds in Spiritual Duties, and Obedience to God's Commands, these Feet must have a Path to walk in, or they can make no Progress. The Word translated Paths, is *τετραγων*, from *τετραγων*, a wheel, and signifies properly the Tract of a Cart-wheel made in the Ground, whereby the Apostle signifies to us, That a Christian Course is Exemplary, as a Path directing others in the Way, as a Cart or Coach-wheel leaves Impressions on the Ground, so a Christian's Carriage leaves Impressions, as all sorts of People may notice. Our Obedience to God is called *walking before him*, Gen. 17. 1. Chap. 5. 24. and it is called our *Path*, Psal. 119. 35 — 105. and it is so called, because it is that wherein we are continually Conversant, and wherein we tend to the End we aim at. This Path is either taken Objectively, and so it is nothing else but the Will of God which is the Rule of our Walk, Galat. 6. 16. This is Invariable, perfectly Straight, cannot be made Lame or Crooked: Or, it may be considered, with Respect to these who walk in it, and so there may be Degrees of Straightness or Lameness. 2. Consider how we are to make our Paths straight, and this is, to walk Uprightly in the Paths of Obedience, having Respect to all God's Commands, and to walk so visibly in these Paths, as our Practice may be a good Example to others.

The second Part of the Text contains a Motive pressing the Duty, *Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.* Where consider, 1. The Evil of omitting this Duty, *That which is lame may be turned out of the way.* The Word translated *Lame* properly belongs to the Body, and useth to be applied to such as are defective in their

their Feet, Legs or Limbs, whereby they are unable to walk, it is here applied to the Soul, and signifies a Defect in its Faculties; as a lame Man is unfit for a Race, and is ready to leave the right Way, so a Professor who is not thoroughly informed in his Understanding and settled in his Will and Affections about Religion, is ready to wander to this or that Side, to Apostatize from the Truth; and so were some among the Jews, who would retain the *Mosaic Ceremonies* and Worship with the Doctrine of the Gospel. 2ly, We have the Remedy provided to prevent this Evil, *Let it rather be healed*: It is the Duty of real Christians who are confirmed in the Faith, to be so far from doing any thing which may occasion weak Christians to stumble or turn from the way, as they are to endeavour to remove the Causes of Lameness, and to confirm and establish them in the Faith. From this Text

Observe 1. *That it is our Duty, not only to have a general Profession of walking in the Ways of God, but to take heed to the manner of our Walk, that it be straight.*

Observe 2. *That Hestation and Doubtfulness about important Truths, or halting in known Duty, is a black Mark of an evil Frame of Heart, and ready to turn Professors out of the way.*

Observe 3. *When we see Persons in such an Estate, we are to be careful so to carry, as not to give occasion to their further Miscarriage, but rather to endeavour their Healing.*

I return to Observe First, *That it is our Duty not only to have a general Profession of walking in the Ways of God, but to take heed to the manner of our Walk that it be straight.*

To prepare this Doctrine for your Use, I shall shew, First, What is imported in this Duty of *making straight Paths*. 2ly, Prove that it is our Duty.

As to the First, The Import of this Duty of *making our Paths straight* may be comprehended in these two, 1. That we walk Uprightly in our Christian Course in all Duties of Obedience. 2. That our Walk be attended with much Tendernefs and Watchfulness.

As to the First, We are to study Uprightness, Ingenuity and Honesty in the whole Course of our Obedience, without this the whole of our Profession is but meer Sham; for this alone is that which seasons religious Duties, and is the Jewel God is most delighted in, *Psal. 51. 6.* If it be asked, How may I know if the Profession I have been under for some time be Straight, Single and Sincere? Answer, Try it by these Evidences, 1. The straight honest Soul, the best he hath is for God, *the First Fruits*, the fat of the Flock, whereas the crooked halting Hypocrite gives him only the *Lame*, and the Blind, the Refuse of the Flock; but the honest Believer, as God calls for the Heart, *Prov. 23. 6.* so he gives it to him, he draws near to the Lord, not only with the Mouth and the Lips as the Hypocrite, *Isa. 29. 13.* but with his whole Heart and Soul. 2ly, He who is Sincere, walks in God's plain Path by his Rule, and not by the crooked Rules of the World, which the Hypocrite goes in, as 1. The Judgment of others, this is the Hypocrites Bible; an Assembly of Angels cannot by their Opinion make an unlawful thing warrantable to me, says the honest Soul, *to the Law and to the Testimony*, this is my Rule, *1 Peter* may erre and dissemble for a time, *Gal. 2. 17.* therefore I will follow only the unerring Guide of the Word of God. 2. Fashion and Custom leads the Men of this World, but the Lord's People know *the Customs of the People are vain*, *Jer. 10. 3.* *The fashion of this world vanisheth away*, a wise Man will not set his Watch by the Clock, but by the Sun. 3. It is my Conscience, says the Hypocrite, and his Conscience is no Rule, for it is defiled, *Titus 1. 15.* An erring Conscience, such as Paul had before his Conversion, *Act. 26. 9.* can be no Rule. 4. Providence, such a Man prospers, and yet walks so, takes Liberty

to himself in Pleasures, therefore I will do so too; there are many when God's Candle of Prosperity shines on their Head, his Wrath hangs over their Soul, *Psal. 73. 3.* Haman's Banquet was his Usher to the Gallows: But the honest straight Soul refuses these false and unsound Rules, they have a more sure Word of Prophecy to walk by.

Thirdly, The honest Soul is endued with straight Principles, and that is Faith working by Love, he Hears, Reads, Prays, Meditates, Examines himself, and Communicates by Faith, and in these and every other Duty, the Love of Christ constrains him.

Fourthly, He acts to a noble and high End, he is not sordid and mean in his Designs, not Selfish and Sinful, but Sublime and Seraphick, God and his Glory are his chief Aim, if his Life be laid in Ballance with this, they give it the Preference; but the Hypocrite sacrifices to his own Drag, to be seen of Men, *Matth. 6. 5.* is the Motto fit to be write on all his Performances.

Fifthly, He has respect to all commanded Duties, and hates every false Way, he doth not pick and choose some Duties, but follows the Lord fully, and who are so honest as to do their best to please the Lord, he will be so compassionate as to forgive their worst.

Sixthly, He is zealous for God, he cannot bear them that are Evil, *Rev. 2. 2.* When the Apostle Paul saw the Athenians wholly given to Idolatry, his Spirit was stirred within him, *Acts 17. 16.*

Seventhly, The sincere Soul is of a publick Spirit, like *Nehemiah*, Chap. 2. 3. Why should not my Countenance be sad, when the City, the Place of my Fathers Sepulchre lieth waste, and the Gates thereof are consumed with Fire? Not like the Hypocrite who is at ease in Zion, and puts the evil Day far away, *Amos 6.* So much for the first thing imported in this Duty of making our Paths straight.

Secondly, This Duty imports that our Walk should be attended with much Tenderness, Care and Circumspection; and this comprehends, 1. A holy Preciseness in all commanded Duties, to miss or baulk none willingly, but like *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*, *Luke 1. 6.* To walk in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless. 2. To endeavour to perform every Duty in the outmost Measure of holy Exactness, *Matth. 5. 48.* Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. 3. To perform these Duties in a suitable and holy Manner, not by Constraint, but willingly and cheerfully, taking Pleasure in them, and doing them in due Place and Season. 4. To take heed to our Conversation constantly, *Psal. 71. 16.* not only to mind Religion when it bears the Applause of the World, but also when it may expose us to Persecution. 5. That we be tender in Practice, not only when in the view of the World, but when in secret, not only in our Duty towards God, but also in our Duties betwixt Man and Man in all our Stations, Relations and Employments, *Acts 24. 16.* Herein do I exercise my self, to have always a Conscience void of Offence, toward God and toward Men.

I proposed, Secondly, To prove and enforce this Doctrine, and it is evident if you consider, 1. The great Task of a Christians Walk obliges him to Straightness and Circumspectness in it, it is to study no less Holiness in Similitude, Kind and Quality than that which is in God, who propones himself to us as our Pattern, saying, *As he who hath called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all manner of Conversation*, *1 Pet. 1. 15.* Be ye followers of God as dear Children, *Eph. 5. 1.* 2ly, Consider, there is an accurate and precise Count and Reckoning to be sought of our walking in straight Paths of Obedience, of every idle Word, yea God will judge the secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, according to this Gospel, *Rom. 2. 16.* How necessary then is it we should be upright and accurate in our Practice, since we are to be judged so exactly concerning it? 3ly, Consider the many Difficulties

this

this Work meets with from the wicked World, from the subtle Policy of Satan, and from the Deceits of our own Hearts conspiring together to draw us out of *straight Paths*, how necessary then is it to oppose our own Wills, Pleasures and Delights, and to walk straightly in the Paths of Holiness?

Use 1. For *Reproof* and *Conviction* to these who endeavour not to make their Path straight in the Ways of the Lord, there are many things evidence how rare this tender Walk is, in this degenerate Age, as 1. The Coldness and Indifferency that is among Professors, they are not in earnest in the Matter of heart Religion & practical Godliness, but *settled on their lees*, satisfied with their own Condition, if ought fall in their Lap without seeking, it is Welcome, but they will not stir up themselves to take hold of God. 2. Unacquaintedness with our selves & our own Condition, the greatest Part know not if they have any Covenant Relation to God, and therefore cannot walk suitably to it. 3. A prevailing Carelessness, alas too many of you are unconcerned what ye do, whether it honour or dishonour God, advantage or destroy your selves, profit and edifie others, or stumble and lose them! 4. Your exceeding Satisfaction with your selves, your own Way and Case ready to reprehend and censure any both your selves, entertaining nothing of an holy Fear and Jealousie over your selves. Yea, 5. How ordinar is a strange Piece of Profanity and Atheism, that a holy, precise and tender Walk becomes matter of Reproach and Mocking as superstitious Niceness.

Use 2. For *Trial* and *Discovery*, If ye have this straight and tender Walk, many deceive themselves concerning it, but if it be such as God will approve, then, 1. It reaches not only your external Behaviour, but your Mind, and the Frame and Disposition of your Souls, accurately observing what gets lodging in the Heart, *Prov. 4. 23.* A Man may be said to be tender or not, as his Heart is watched over or not. 2. It expresses in all Conditions, whether of Prosperity or Adversity, Health or Sickness, Riches or Poverty, the holy tender Christian always endeavours *to have a Conversation* suitable to his Case: Not to be proud and lifted up by the Sun-shine of Prosperity, nor discontent, murmuring and discouraged by Adversity. 3^{ly}, This Straightness in Conversation discovers it self, in small things as well as greater, gross Evils will readily scar the most untender Professor, but who is sincere will shun the first Motions and Beginnings of Sin, the least appearance of Evil. 4^{ly}, This will reach civil Actions as well as religious. 5^{ly}, It reaches Omissions as well as Commissions, not only keeps a Man from doing Evil, but from sitting Opportunities of doing Good. 6^{ly}, It is universal and constant, not *straining as Gnats, and swallowing Camels, sipping Mint and Cummin, and neglecting the greater things of the Law*, that is but meer Niceness and Conceit, yea gross Hypocrisie; but the Christian who is truly straight in his Practice, is zealous for the greater Duties of the Law, and omits not these of meaner Concern. 7^{ly}, It will oblige you to have an accurate Eye not only on the Duty, but also on your selves in doing of it in the right Way and Manner; whereas the Hypocrite is always abroad, never conversing at home with his own Heart, but the tender Christian endeavours to oppose his beloved heart Idols, he sets about not only these Duties which are easie to Nature, but these which are most difficult and cross thereto. 8^{ly}, The tender Christian thinks he can never be so accurate as in Duty he is obliged, *Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14.* *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, but I follow after ——— I press toward the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus.* To conclude, Try if thou be a straight and tender walker with God, by putting thy Soul to answer these Queries; 1. Is my Purpose and Design to have the Applause of Men, or is it like

like the Saints, *1 Thess. 2. 4.* to have the Approbation of God? 3. Is it the Reproach and Shame that attends Sin for present, and the Danger and Misery that follows it hereafter that makes thee tender of committing it? Or is it the Fear of displeasing and dishonouring God, and the real Hatred thou bears at Sin as Sin, *Psal. 119. 113.* 3. Art thou filled with holy Zeal to have God great in the World, and his Glory shine forth, as the Apostle *Phil. 1. 18.*? 4. Is there no Duty in all Religion so full of Difficulty and Self-denial, but thy Soul desires cheerfully to comply with it? The whole holy good Will of God is most acceptable to thee, *Psal. 119. 6.* 5. Art thou sincerely resolved to hold out and hold on in thy tender precise Walk in all Seasons, whether Religion be frowned or smiled upon, never to turn back *the broken in the place of Dragons, and covered with the shadow of Death, Psal. 44. 18, 19.* 6. Makes thou Conscience of opposing the most secret Sins, and doing the secretest Duties, *Math. 6. 3, 6. Psal. 19. 12.* 7. Dost thou engage thy Heart to approach to God in Duties, and does not with the graceless World satisfy thy self in going the Round of them, and taking no notice to thy Heart in them, *2 Kings 10. 31. Exel. 23. 31, 32.* Now upon the whole, if after serious and impartial Search thou find these Evidences of a straight tender Walk, and can give a positive satisfying Answer to these Queries from thy Experiences, then be persuaded thou has great Ground of Peace and Comfort. And this leads me to

Use 3. of Consolation, to these who are of a straight and tender Walk. O what Grounds of Solace and Joy unspeakable arise to you, as, *First,* You have Right to great inward Peace, Tranquility and Serenity of Soul; *This may be your rejoicing, the Testimony of your Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God ye have had your Conversation in the World, 2 Cor. 1. 12.* 2^{ly}, This straight Walk is the Porch and Entry to the Chamber of Presence, it brings the beloved Disciple to lean on Jesus Bosom, and to have his Heart burning within him with Love to his blessed Master. 3^{ly}, It puts a Respect and Honour upon Religion, it reflects a peculiar Glory on the Attainments and Excellencies of God, when as God *hath set apart the Godly for himself, so to the View and Conviction of the VWorld, they live to him and above the VWorld, Enoch-like walking with God.* 4^{ly}, It is the way to squeeze out the Sweet and Comfort of Religion to the Soul, a circumspect tender Believer may gain some Soul-food out of every thing that passes. 5^{ly}, It frees a Man from vexatious Solitude, that untender walking is attended with, he is not cumbered about these many things, he has but one Design to drive, and that is to please and enjoy God. 6^{ly}, It brings a Man to take his Measures of present things by the Rules of Faith and Eternity, not with others to judge of things by Sense and the Respects they have to a present VWorld, *he looks to the things which are not seen, which are Eternal, 2 Cor. 4. 18.* 7^{ly}, This makes a Man stable, firm and steadfast in suffering Times, *the Spirit of God and of Glory rests on them, a Stock of the Saints Prayers is interposed for them, all the VWorld over, they have a Right to a Multitude of Promises, for every Line whereof the Faithfulness of God is engaged.*

Use 4. Of Exhortation, I beseech you, Brethren, by the Mercies of God, endeavour to have your Conversation straight and upright in the Ways of the Lord. To enforce this consider, *First,* How many Obligations bind you to endeavour such a VWalk, Gratitude to God your bountiful Benefactor, whom ye can by no other Method repay, for his Goodness calls for it; your Duty in Obedience to God's peremptory Command in the Text discovers it to be necessary: It is your own Interest, for by such a VWalk ye may obtain

obtain God's Favour here and hereafter; you have by solemn Vows at Baptism, at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and other Occasions, obliged your selves so to walk, and it will be no less than the high Crime of Perjury to break such solemn Vows; God's Honour is concerned in you, Religion will be reproached, the Godly stumbled, and the ~~Wicked~~ will blaspheme the Name of God, if ye follow sinful Practices; but if ye walk straight in the V Ways of the Lord, God shall be glorified, strong Christians encouraged to Praise God for Grace bestowed on you, weak ones edified and encouraged to follow your Example, the Mouths of the V Wicked shall be stopped, your Ministers Hearts shall rejoice, and your own Souls shall reap unspeakable Comfort. 2^d, If ye have such a straight and upright Conversation, the great God will approve and commend you, as he commended Enoch, Gen. 5. 24. and Noah, Gen. 6. 9. Caleb who followed the Lord fully, Numb. 14. 24. Job who was perfect and upright, fearing the Lord, and shunning Evil, Job 1. 5. Daniel a Man greatly beloved, Dan. 10. 11, 19. Zacharias and Elizabeth who walked in all the Commands and Ordinances of the Lord blameless, Luke 1. 6. Nathanael who was an Israelite indeed, John 1. 47. and the Primitive Christians who did follow the Lamb whither soever he goeth, Rev. 14. 4. The Lord commends his believing Spouse's holy Walk, and all her particular Graces, Song Chap. 4. and 7. and he will make your Name savoury to succeeding Generations, when the Name of the Wicked shall rot, and their Lamp be put out in Obscurity: Yea the Lord will commend Believers who have such an upright Conversation before the great Assembly of Men and Angels at the great Day of Judgment, then he will say, *Ye are they which have continued with me in my Temptations, and I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me*, Luke 22. 28, 29. *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World; I was hungry, and ye gave me meat, thirsty, and ye gave me drink, naked, and ye took me in.*— *In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me*, Matth. 25. 34, 35, —40. These Commendations are infinitely better than the vain Applause of Mortals, and may more than counterballance all the Reproaches, Losses and Crosses you can undergo for walking straight in the Ways of the Lord.

If you ask, How shall I attain to this straight and tender Walk? For Answer, I give you these Directions, 1. Endeavour to be truly serious, and in earnest in this great and concerning Business, the Want of this is the Cause of the general Indifferency, Neutrality and Unwatchfulness that is among People: For this End propose to your selves this as your great Design, to be holily Precise in your Walk, oft and seriously renew this Purpose, and let there be a pressing Endeavour, and incessant Pursuit of this. 2. Labour to have your Soul filled with right Thoughts of God, the Want of this feeds Atheism, Psa. 10. 4: *The wicked through the pride of his Countenance will not seek after God, God is not in all his Thoughts*, but study ye a deep Dependance on him in all your Actions, do all by his Direction, *Committ thy Way to the Lord, and he shall direct thy Path*. 3. Be careful to keep a right inward Frame of Spirit, this is as the Fountain of a holy precise Walk: Therefore entertain a holy Fear and Jealousie over your selves, *Happy is the Man that feareth always*; let Faith be exercised, looking to Christ and to Eternity, be watchful lest the Enemy deceive your Souls, and keep your Hearts burning within you with Love to the blessed Jesus: 4th, Carry always a constant Advertency to your present Work, be present at what ye are doing, when People forget themselves, and live sundry Days and never look over their Work, not mind the main End of it, they cannot walk straightly and tenderly; therefore in the Morning set your Watch, and

forecast

Hebrews XII. Verse 1

forecast the Duties and Difficulties of that Day and make for them, and at Night call your selves to Conscience Bar, and seek Account of your Walk, if it be squared by the Rules of holy Tenderness, and this will be a noble Help! 4th, Labour to grow by every Opportunity and Occasion of Soul Advantage, to be bettered by every Duty and Ordinance. 5th, Let it be your every Days study to die to Sin, to get the Power of it subdued and mortified, this is the way to a spiritual Life and a tender Walk, *Mark 8.* 7th, Be sure to keep in with Conscience, that it may not have the Guilt of any known Sin to charge you with, this makes *the Righteous bold as a Lion.* 8th, Labour to taste of the Sweetness of the Pardon of Sin, and this will oblige to walk tenderly *watching against it.* 9th, Discover the Vanity and Emptiness of the Pleasure of Sin, and Comforts of the World, and get your Hearts and Affections crucified to all below, as being only *a stranger on this Earth.* 10th, Live within View of Death, as if every Day were your last, this will make you tender, doing nothing but what ye would be found doing at Death and Judgment, say, O Soul, if I knew this to be my last Day, would I be thus employed as now I am?

Observe 2. *That Hesitation and Doubtfulness about important Truths, or halting in known Duty is a black Mark of an evil Frame of Heart, and ready to turn Professors out of the Way.*

For illustrating this Point, I shall, First, Shew wherein this evil Frame of Heart discovers it self. 1st, Whence it proceeds.

This evil Frame hath two Parts, the first is *Hesitation and Doubtfulness about important Truths*, which appears, 1. In Levity and Unsettledness, like a lame Man wavering from side to side; Man is fickle as the Wind, stays long in no Quarter, this occasions doubting of important Truths, and under the Notion of free thinking to lash out into extravagant Opinions, an Evil too common in this Age, when Men deride the Faith delivered to the Saints, accounting Orthodoxy an opprobrious Name, and profess themselves Enemies to Systems, Creeds and Confessions, that they may introduce a Body of Divinity of their own framing, *These are Clouds without Water, carried about of Winds,* Jude, v. 12. *Children tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of Doctrine,* Eph. 4. 14. 2. Like lame Men they stand upon no solid Foundation, they know no solid Scripture Ground or solid Reason for what they Profess, and therefore every Wind of heretical Doctrine is ready to blow them off their Feet, and make them fall from the Truth. 3. They are irresolved what Truths to adhere to or abide Trial for, they love to have a Profession of Religion in peaceable Times, but will not so far embark in Defence of any Truth, but if a Storm of Persecution arise, they may retire to some Shelter. 4th, Such seek Excuses to turn out of the Way by unnecessary converting with teachers of Error, going to hear them, and read their Books, (while they have no Skill to understand the Controversie) prosecuting Arguments and Questions for their Errors, and withal shunning such Means as would recover them, and entertaining Prejudices at such as would aim to do it, whereby is verified the saying of Jeremiah, Chap. 5. 31. *The Prophets prophesie falsely, and my People love to have it so.*

The second Part of this evil Frame is *halting in known Duty*, which appears, 1. In turning aside from Church Assemblies, deserting the hearing of God's Word, and not joining in public Ordinances, this is dangerous; therefore the Apostle cautions against it, Heb. 10. 25. frequently Defection begins with it. 2. In adventuring on some lesser Sin to shun Suffering, as to renounce some Truth by Word or Writ, take some sinful Oath, or persecute the Godly; rob them of their Goods, Honours, Lives, or deny them Necessaries; these are like the breaking in of Waters, when the Breach is made, it is difficult

to know where it may stop. 3. In forbearing necessary Duties, when discharged under severe Pains, Iniquity being established by a Law, this is quite contrary to Daniel's laudable Practice, who notwithstanding of the Law, That of any asked a Petition of any god or man, save of king Darius, should be cast into the den of lions, yet prayed three times a day to God with his windows open toward heaven, Dan. Chap. 6: 8 — 10. 4. In complying with superstitious Innovations and Ceremonies in the Worship and Service of God, like these Judaizing Christians, who would retain the Judaical Ceremonies and Worship, with the Doctrine of the Gospel, with whom the holy Apostle Peter complied too much, Galat. Chap. 2. v. 13, 14. I proceed

Secondly, To enquire, Whence this Hesitation and Doubtfulness about important Truths, and halting in known Duty may proceed? Answer 1. It may proceed from humane Frailty and Inconstancy, Evil is present with us, but how to do what is good, we know not. 2. From corrupt and unrenewed Nature, Isa. 57. 20, 21. The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and dirt, there is no peace saith my God to the wicked. 3. From Spiritual Sloathfulness to search the whole Scripture, Truth lies deep as rich Veins of Gold, we must search all the Parts of the written Word to observe it, and this will require some serious Application and Strength of Mind to compare Spiritual Things with Spiritual. 4. Teachers of Heresies are very subtle, and essay all Means to gain upon weaker professors. 5. An undue cowardly Fear of Men too much prevails, Truth which is bold in itself, is frequently betrayed and baffled by Cowardly Mortals, who are afraid to lose Lands, Honours, or Estates, to suffer Bonds, Imprisonment, Banishment, or Death, for Christ and his Cause, not considering their greater Danger, that they who deny Christ before men, shall deny before his Father in Heaven, Matth. 10. 33. 6. From a base earthly minded Spirit, that loves the Glory and Applause of great Men, or of a prevailing Party and earthly Enjoyments, that like the Jewish Rulers of whom the Evangelist tells, John 12. 42, 43. Tho' they believed on Christ, yet because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. And the Apostle Paul informs us, 1 Tim. 6. 10. That the love of money is the root of all evil, which some having coveted, have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 2 Tim. 4. 10. Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.

I shall conclude this Doctrine with One Use of Exhortation, Beware of this evil Frame of hesitating about important Truths, and halting in known Duty. To Enforce this, I shall, 1. Shew it is an evil and dangerous Frame. 2. Give some Advices whereby ye may be directed to guard against it. As to the First, Since this Disposition of Mind, springs from so evil a Fountain, as is already hinted, it cannot but be bad; Yet I shall further shew you a few of its bitter Effects, as 1. It discomposes and unfits you for the Discharge of Duty, the best of Men find it difficult to keep their Thoughts from wandering, and their Minds from Distraction in the greatest Calm of Peace, but it is a thousand times harder, when in such a doubtful anxious fearful Condition. 2. It will expose you to great Confusion and disorder of Mind, it will make your Hearts to move as Trees of the Wood are moved with the Wind, uncertain whither to go, to what Hand to turn, what Course to steer; Whereas the Righteous, who are resolute to adhere to the Truths of God, and known Duty, will be bold as a Lion. 3. This makes you trust Men too much, and distrust God, to think so much on the Power of Man to hurt, as to forget the Power of God to save; this is the Sin God rebukes in his own People, Isa. 51. 12, 13. I, even I am he that comforteth you:

who are troubled with these doubts, be afraid of a heart that shall be made as the grasper, and forget the Lord's duty. This leads you into many Sins and Snakes, Prov. 29. 24. The fear of man brings a snare. This hesitating and halting Disposition of Mind, may be an Inlet to Apostasy, whereby ye will dishonour God in a Day of Trial, reproach Religion as if it were not worth your while to suffer for it, stumble the tender Godly, open the Mouths of the Wicked to blaspheme God, and ruin your own Soul. Therefore may I Expostulate with you in *Elijah's words*, 1 Kings 18. 21. *How long halt ye between two opinions?* Since the Religion we own in this Land is true, let your Mind be firmly established in the Faith of it, and in Practice never decline from the straight Paths of God, whatever Allurements, Threats, or Persecutions, may attack you. And

For your Direction, take a few Advices, 1. Pray earnestly for a through Change of the State of your Soul by Conversion; a sanctified Heart established by Grace, is the most Sovereign Preservative against Error and Inconstancy in the Ways of God, Heb. 13. 9. This will put you under the Protection of that great Promise, John 16. 13. *When the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.* 2. Endeavour to have your Mind solidly established in the Faith of the grand Principles of Christianity, and more especially of these that are like to be opposed by Adversaries, use all ordinary Means, as reading the Scriptures and other useful Books, conversing with experienced solid Christians, serious Meditation, and above all join Prayer, that the Lord may, *Sanctify you by his truth*, John 17. 17. 3. Beware of frequent and familiar Converse with Teachers of Heresie, this Direction the Holy Ghost frequently gives, 1 Cor. 15. 33. *Evil company will corrupt good manners.* 4. Beware of frequent and familiar Converse with Teachers of Heresie, this Direction the Holy Ghost frequently gives, 1 Cor. 15. 33. *Evil company will corrupt good manners.* 5. Beware of frequent and familiar Converse with Teachers of Heresie, this Direction the Holy Ghost frequently gives, 1 Cor. 15. 33. *Evil company will corrupt good manners.* 6. In prospect of trying Times, furnish your Selves with suitable Promises of the Covenant, personally renew your Engagements to be the Lord's, and ask Strength from him to be Faithful to the Death, that in the End ye may gain a Crown of Life. 7. Endeavour to heal others who are halting in the Ways of God. And this leads me to

Observe 3. *That when Professors of Religion are Hesitating or Doubting of important Truths, and halting in known Duty, we should in our Stations be careful not to give Occasion to their further Negligence; but to endeavour their Healing.* To recommend this to your Practice, I shall, First, Open wherein the Duty consists. Secondly, Press it by some Reasons.

As to the First, Our Duty to heal Brethren who are Lame and Halting in the Ways of God, consists in this, 1. That ye should be seriously affected with their Condition, as touched with Zeal for God, and Sympathy with their Souls; deprecate this Stroke as ye would the Sword or Famine. 2. Beware of Offending or Stumbling, occasioning them to fall into Sin, Rom. 14. 21. The venting of corrupt Doctrine, or corrupt and sinful Practices of Eminent Professors, by slighting necessary Duty, declining from the Truths of God, persecuting openly or secretly his People, and being impatient under the Cross,

Cross, may humble weak Brethren. 2. Endeavour to strengthen and confirm Professors, who are lame in the Ways of God, lead them to take Delight in Ordinances, which are Means for their Edification, *Ephes. 4. 12, 13, 14. Heb. 13. 17.* To converse with experienced Christians and Ministers, drop Words that may be useful to convince and inform them of the Errors they are inclined to, direct them to Christian Fellowship, *1st. 5. 16, 17. Heb. 10. 24, 25.* This, if rightly ordered and managed, may be very useful, but if abused, may prove a Nursery to hatch Error and much Mischief; Propose also to weak Brethren, the Examples of Christians who have gone before them, encourage them by the Promises of God's Word to honest persevering Sufferers, and tell them of the awful Threats against Apostasy. 4. Honour the Truth by your holy Conversation, *Titus 2. 10. Adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour.* Verse 11, 12. *For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.* Phil. 2. 15. *Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.* 5. Zealously defend the Truths of God whatever they cost you, they are well worth to be Suffered for: The Primitive Christians overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and loved not their lives to the death, *Revel. 12. 11.* Tho ye cannot Dispute, yet ye may die for the Truth.

Secondly, I shall prove this Duty by a few Reasons; and First, Consider Christ's Command in the Text, *Left him which is lame be carried out of the way, but let it rather be healed.* Our Lord says to Peter, Luke 22:32. *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* These Commands should have a binding Force on your Consciences, which, if ye dare to slight, ye shall be highly Inexcusable. 2^d, By doing this Duty, you may save your Brother from Ruine, 1st Cor. 7:16. *What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?* How great is this Gain? James 4:10. *He which compasseth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sin.* This is more than to gain the World. 3^d, God may have given thee establishing Gifts for this very End, that thou may employ thy Talent for the good of others, *Micah 6:8.* *The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as dew from the Lord.* As the Dew refresheth the Grass, and is Beneficial to it, so, where this Remnant is, it should be a Blessing to these about them, as one Chip of Fire kindles a heap of Coals, so may Grace given to thee, enflame many Hearts with Love to the straight Ways of God. 4th, Consider how Zealous corrupt wicked Men are to entice others to forsake the Ways of God, *Prov. 1:10, 11, 14.* They entice, saying, *Come with us, let us lay wait for blood: we will catch the just in his own trap.* *Matth. 23:15.* *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him ten-fold more the child of hell than your selves.* Should not ye be more Zealous to save Souls than others are to destroy them? 5th, If ye be Sincere in this Design, whether your Endeavour succeed or not, your OWN Souls shall gain great Advantage, *Prov. 11:25.* *Md. 2:16.* 17.

HEBREWS

HEBREWS XII. Verse 14.

Follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the LORD.

THE general Nature of this Epistle as to the Style of writing is *Paramelical* or *Hortatory*: The Exhortation proposed and enforced is *Constancy* and *Perseverance* in the Faith of the Lord Jesus, and Profession of the Gospel, against Temptations and Persecutions which the Hebrews had to conflict with from the Judaical Church State, and Mosaic Ordinances they were called to relinquish. The Divine Institution of this State with its Worship, the solemnity of the Covenant whereon it was established, the Glory of its Priesthood and Sacrifice; and other Divine Ordinances were continually pressed to allure and draw them off from the Gospel; and this gave Occasion to the Doctrinal Part of the Epistle. The Apostle having fixed their Minds in the Truth, and armed them against the foresaid Temptations, he comes next to exhort to Perseverance under the many Persecutions, from the obstinate Members of the Jewish Church. In order to this End he sheweth the only Way and Mean on their Part, whereby they may be preserved and kept constant in their Profession, is by Faith: For which End he enlarges in the Description of the Nature of it, shewing its Fitness for effectuating this great Design of the Saints Perseverance with a Variety of confirming Instances in the preceding Chapter.

This Chapter contains an Application of the Doctrine confirmed in the preceding, for the Use of the believing Hebrews. (Doctrine and Use was the Apostles Method, and must at least virtually be theirs who regard either Sense, Reason or Experience in their preaching.) In order thereto we have, 1. A pressing Exhortation from the Testimonies before insisted upon, with new additional Motives, Encouragements and Directions to Verse 12. 2. A Direction to special Duties necessary to a suitable Compliance with the general Exhortation, and subservient to its compleat Obedience, from Verse 12. to v. 17. Among which my Text comes in as one of these great Duties indispensibly necessary for that great End of our Constancy and Perseverance in the Profession of the Gospel. For no Light, no Knowledge of the Truth, no Resolution or Courage will perfect any Man in his Profession, especially in times of Trial, without a diligent attending on Duties of Holiness and Gospel Obedience. *Follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord.*

This general Direction consists of two Parts, the first contains our Duty toward Men, *Follow Peace with all Men*. The second our Duty towards God, *and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord*. It is the last Design at this time; only to make way to

it, I shall passingly touch the first, wherein we have, 1. The Duty prescribed, which is Peace. 2. The Manner of attaining it, to follow it earnestly, *desire*, which denotes a vehement Pursuit. 3. With whom we are to seek Peace, it is with all Men. Hence,

Observe, That to endeavour Peace with all Men is a Frame and Disposition of Spirit, eminently suited to the Doctrine and Grace of the Gospel.

A froward Spirit apt and ready for Strife and Contention, to give and receive Provocations, to retain a Sense of Injuries, so as to pass them on to a malicious Resentment, is quite contrary to what the Gospel requires of us. The Glory of the Kingdom of Christ is frequently promised under the Name of Peace, with a Cessation of Wars and Contentions among Men; what Ground have we to lament this, as an Evidence how little of the Power of the Gospel remains at this Day in the Minds of Men in the World, when there is so much Hatred, Strife, Contention and Division among them who are called Christians?

It may be enquired what this Peace is. Vay, How it is to be followed, as to attain it with all Men.

First, This Peace comprehends Peace Oeconomical in Families, *Psal. 68. 6.* 2^d Peace Ecclesiastical in the Church, in opposition to Schism and Persecution, 3^d Political Peace in the State, this is the Glory of a Kingdom, Peace with Neighbour Nations is sweet. *Psal. 122. 6.* Blessed be God that the Waters of Blood are allraged with us, and we can see the Windows of our Ark open, and the Dove returning with an Olive Branch of Peace. When God in his Mercy hath put up a foreign Sword that was furnished against us, let it be far from us to draw an intestine one to sheath it in our own Bowels. The Word in the Original expressing Peace is comprehensive of all Blessings, it is the Glory of a Kingdom and the Name of Plenty, *Psal. 147. 14.* He maketh Peace in thy Borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the Wheat. This would seem to call aloud to you, Most Honourable, Paternal now met as Representatives of the Nation, that ye follow Peace with all Men, and especially among your selves in this August and Honourable Assembly, that Oneness, Harmony and Concord may express themselves in all your Consults and Determinations, laying aside all groundless Jealousies and Animolities, which are almost as dangerous and troublesome in the State, as unsound Opinions in the Church. I pray for the Performance of that Promise, *Ezek. 11. 19.* that the Lord may give you one Heart, and *Zeph. 3. 9.* that ye may serve him with one Consent. That ye may do this,

I come, Secondly, To shew how this Peace is to be pursued, so as it may be attained; and First, Who would follow Peace must be Students of Righteousness, The Fruit of Righteousness is Peace, James 3. 18. To wrong no Man, to give every one his due, to do unto all Men as we would them to do unto us; Man's coming short of these common Rules of Justice, gives Rise to the want of Peace, to Confusions, Disorders and Contentions in the World. Vay, We would endeavour to be Useful to all, if we would have Peace with all, it is not enough that we hurt no Man, defraud no Man; but in your Stations and Capacities wherein God has placed you, that ye be useful to all Men in all Duties of Piety, Charity and Beneficence, *Gal. 6. 10.* As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all Men, especially to them who are of the household of Faith. 3^d, Avoid just Offence, this will beget, preserve and maintain Peace, *1 Cor. 10. 32.* Give none Offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God, *Job 22. 21.* Acquaint thy self with God and be at Peace, and so good shall come unto thee. 4th, Follow Peace with all Men

Men in the way of Holiness, we are not to do it by Compliance with them in any Evil, nor by Neglect of any Duty, nor by any thing which entrencheth upon Holiness towards God. This leads me to

The second Duty we are directed to follow in the Text, *And Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord.* This contains, 1. A Duty. 2. The Duty enforced by a weighty and cogent Motive. The Duty is, *follow Holiness*; the Motive, from its absolute Necessity, *without it no Man shall see the Lord*; By Holiness is understood universal Sanctity of our Souls, consisting in the Mortification of our sinful Lusts and Affections, in the gradual Renovation of our Natures, and Sanctification of our Souls, which must be followed with all imaginable Earnestness, by all Ways and Means appointed for that End; for *without this no Man*, be what he will, of no Sex, Quality, Station or Condition *shall see the Lord.* It is all one whether we understand *the Lord* absolutely, or *the Lord* Christ in a special Manner by the Name *Lord* in the Text, for we shall never see the one without the other. This Sight of God which is intellectual not corporeal, finite not absolutely comprehensive of the Divine Essence, is the very Sum of our future Blessedness.

From the Text so explained,

Observe, *That such, and none but such as are Students of Holiness here, shall be Enjoyers of Heaven and the Presence of God hereafter*; follow it, for *without it no Man shall see the Face of God*; No Holiness here, and no Happiness hereafter, these go inseparably together.

The Doctrine is almost in the Words of the Text, only to confirm it, you may look some other Scriptures plainly shewing that Heavens Gates are fast shut against all unholy Souls, Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Rev. 21. 27. *Within the new Jerusalem shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.* Our Lord himself by a repeated Asseveration puts the Doctrine beyond all Debate, to him who hath any Credit to give to Divine Testimony, John 3. 3. *Verily verily I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God*; the Frame of the old Man must be dissolved, and a new Frame created, or no Heaven can be enjoyed.

I shall further illustrate this Doctrine, First, By opening up the Nature of Holiness. 2ly, By giving Reasons why *without Holiness* here, there is no Happiness, nor the least shadow of the Hope of Heaven hereafter. 3ly, Make Application of the whole.

To open up the Nature of Holiness, the Study whereof is so necessary, it is requisite, 1. We shew what it is not. 2. Lay down some Positions for clearing what *Positively* it is.

For the First, There is nothing concerning which People are more ready to be mistaken, and in mistaking whereof there is more Hazard than in this Fundamental Point; and therefore allow me with all due Deference to you, my Honourable Auditors, to represent to you these few things, which are only Counterfeits of this Holiness in the Text, which if you rest upon and come no further, ye shall never see the Lord, but your Souls are undone Eternally. As First, Meek Morality, tho' even the same in this Generation is much a missing among the greater Part, yet when attained to, comes far short of this Holiness which the Text makes so indispensibly necessary. To be just and temperate, and of a fair external Deportment, having the outward Conversation unblotted with any ignominious Scandal is good, but not enough, this is not the Holiness in the Text: For, 1. Heathens have attained to this, as Cato, Socrates and Aristides far excelled many nominal Christians in our Day; yet alas, all this is but Nature refined, there is nothing

nothing of Christ, Grace or Holiness in it. Yes, a meer mortal Person have secret Antipathy at real Holiness, he hates gross Immorality, but hates Grace as much as Vice; the Snake hath a fine Colour, but a Sting; the Snakes who were the chief of idolatrous Heathens, were the bitterest Enemies Paul had, *Act. 17, 18.*

Secondly, Others mistake this Holiness by placing it in *Superstitious Devotion, Images, Altars, Vestments, Holy Water*; and a great many superstitious at least, if not idolatrous Ceremonies, that obtain in some Churches, are far from Holiness. For, 1. They put no intrinsic Goodness into a Man, the legal Purifications and Washings that were of God's own Appointment, and the Priests who did wear the holy Garments, and had holy Oil poured on them, were never the more Holy, without the anointing of the Spirit; much less can these superstitious Innovations in Religion, which God never appointed, contribute any Holiness to Man. 2. All this superstitious Holiness hath nothing of the Heart in it, if to tell over a Row of Beads and cinge to an Altar, and sprinkle holy Water were Holiness, and all that is required to *Jesus Christ*, Hell would be empty. A third Mistake, Many take Hypocrisy for Holiness, external Devotion lends forth a Lustre that dazzles the Eyes of Beholders, *having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof*, 2 Tim. 3. 5. these are *Lamps without Oil, whitened Sepulchres*. The Apostle, Eph. 4. 24. speaks of *true Holiness*, implying that there is an Holiness that is spurious, bastardly and feigned, which signifies nothing. What were the *False Virgins*; better of their blazing Lamps, since they wanted Oil? The highest Fault of this is, to have a Name to live, while ye are dead, Rev. 3. 1. 3ly, Some take restraining Grace for Holiness, but a wicked Man may forbear Vice, tho' he hate it not, Sin would they, but Conscience stands like the Angel with a flaming Sword, and frights them, this is not heart Holiness, Sin is curbed, but not cured, the Lion is in Chains, but a Lion still. 4ly, Common Grace, which is a slight transient Work of the Spirit, is not the same with Holiness; there may be some Light in the Understanding, but it is not humbling, some Checks in the Conscience, but not awaking; after Conviction Men go to the House of Mirr, and take the Flap to drive away the Spirit of Sadness, and so all their Convictions die and come to nothing.

Thirdly, I come to lay down some Positions for clearing Positively what Holiness is; and, First, This is a divine supernatural Work, we are naturally Polluted, and to make Holy is God's own Privilege, Lev. 21. 8. *I the Lord which justify you*. Weeds grow of themselves, but Flowers must be planted, Holiness is a Flower of the Spirit of God's planting, therefore it is called the Sanctification of the Spirit. 2ly, This Holiness hath two Parts, *Privative and Positive*. The *Privative Part* of it is Mortification, which consists in purging out of Sin; Sin is compared to a Leaven that lowers, and to a Leprosy that defiles: Now Holiness purges out the old Leaven, 1 Cor. 5. 7. tho' it takes not away the Being of it, yet the Dominion and regnant Power of it is removed. The *Positive Part* of it is Vivification, which is a spiritual refining of the Soul, which in Scripture is called *renewing of our Minds*, Rom. 12. 2. and *partaking of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. 3ly, This Holiness in the Text is an inherent internal qualitative Holiness adorning the hidden Man of the Heart, 1 Pet. 3. 4. and expresseth it self, 1. In infusing holy Principles or supernatural Graces into the Soul, such as the Apostle mentions, Gal. 5. 22, 23. *The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*. These Habits of Grace so distinguished by their several Names, are nothing else but the new Man, or new Nature, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness, Eph. 4. 24. without these Seeds of Holiness, no Harvest of Happiness

can be expected: 2, Holiness consists in the holy Use and Exercise of these supernatural Graces expressed in a holy Walk and Practice; all holy Habits must be brought forth into holy Acts. It is with holy Habits as with natural, the more they are acted and exercised, the more they are strengthened, where there is Holiness of Disposition, there must be Holiness of Conversation. 4y, Holiness is most Beautiful, it makes God and Angels fall in Love with those who have it, *Psal. 110. 3. Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power, in the Beauties of Holiness.* It makes God Glorious, *Exod. 15. 11.* No wonder it be the Glory of poor Mortals. Holiness is Heaven begun in the Soul, and differs only from Glory in Degrees. 5y, This Holiness where it is real, it will be 1. Lasting and continuing, it is the Seed of God that remains, *1 John 3. 9.* Seeming Holiness may be lost, painted Colours may be washed off, but true Holiness is a Blossom of Eternity, it is the anointing that abides in Believers, *1 John 2. 27.* 2. As it is abiding, so it is still progressive, *Phil. 3. 14.* it is like the Morning Sun that grows brighter to the Mid-day. 3. It is universal, a Man that truly fears God, will endeavour to have his Walk conform to the Rules of the Gospel at all times, Sabbath and Week Day, in all Places, at home or abroad, in Church, in his Family, or in his Cloister; in all Companies good or bad, in all Duties publick or private, and in every act of Duty; he with his Heart loves Holiness, and resolves and endeavours to have it shining in his Conversation. Thus I have opened the Nature of Holiness.

Secondly, I shall give Reasons of the Doctrine, proving, that if we be not Students of Holiness, we shall never see the Lord; and, First, To neglect this Duty is an Evidence of the greatest Contempt of God's Authority interposed, enjoining it with such an awful Certification. 2y, Who are without Holiness are without Pardon, *1 Cor. 6. 11.* and who are not justified in this Life, shall not be glorified in the World to come, *Rom. 8. 30.* 3y, Who are without Holiness, are absolute Strangers to God, Aliens to the Common-wealth of Israel, Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, *Eph. 2. 12.* Can God dwell with such in Glory? Of old the uncircumcised in Heart were discharged from entering God's Sanctuary, *Ezek. 44. 9.* how then can a Holy God ever allow them to enter the New Jerusalem? 4y, Unholy Persons are the Devil's Familiars, they are the Devil's Lodging and House where he dwells, *Luke 11. 27.* He is their Father, and they are his Children, *John 8. 44.* He is said to work in the Children of Disobedience, as a Workman in his Shop, *Eph. 2. 2.* they have Bosom Fellowship with him, *1 John 3. 10.* they eat, drink and converse with him, *1 Cor. 10. 21.* how can God be familiar with such who are so nearly joined with his irreconcilable Adversary? 5y, Such as are void of Holiness carry with them a direct Opposition and Contrariety to God in their Natures, Principles, Practices, Aims, Minds, Wills, Affections, Judgments and Resolutions, *John 8. 38.* they are opposite to his Name, Nature, Being and Glory. Now such Antipathies will never incorporate or unite together: If the Wicked turn not from his evil way, God must deny himself and break his Word, if ever he be admitted to see his Face in Mercy, and enjoy him here or hereafter. 6y, Want of Holiness secludes Men from Fellowship with Believers here in Time, *Lev. 10. 10. Ezek. 44. 9. 23. Chap. 22. 26. Jer. 15. 19.* A Difference must be put between the Holy and Profane, between the Clean and the Unclean. The Lord's People are commanded to come out from among, to be separate, and not touch the unclean thing, *2 Cor. 6. 17.* much more may Want of Holiness seclude Men from Communion with God hereafter. 7y, God has appointed Holiness as the Principle that capacitates a Soul for enjoying his Presence, *Matth. 5. 8.* Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God, but nothing that defileth or worketh abomination, shall enter

enter the new Jerusalem, Revel. 21. 27. It is an undefiled Inheritance, 1. Peter 11. 4. 8th. Without Holiness a Man is good for nothing, and therefore not fit to enjoy this Height of Happiness; without Holiness Man is neither good for Church nor State, to Rule, nor to be Ruled: Such Men in Scripture resemble Chaff, Dust, Briers and Thorns which are good for nothing, and what should such do in Heaven, who are fit for nothing in Earth? No, they shall be eternally banished from the Presence of the Lord, and Glory of his Power.

I come now to apply this Doctrine, First, For Reproof and Conviction to unholy Persons. As 1. To these who are Prophane, who give up themselves to all manner of Impiety, who draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and Sin as with a Cart Rope, who are so madly set on Wickedness, that neither the Rods of God, the Challenges of their own Consciences, nor the Flashes of Hells Terrors can reduce them; but are resolved they will gratify their Lusts, tho' they damn their Souls; they will continue to wallow in Drunkenness, Whoredom, Cursing and Swearing, be the Hazard never so great. 2^{ly}. It reproves such who not only refuse to study Holiness themselves, but scoff and mock at it in others, it is that God glories in, yet they are ashamed of it. Believe it, God will take all the Affronts done to his Image as done to himself, and accordingly will revenge it: 3^{ly}. These who not only mock it, but maliciously persecute it in others, this Spirit greatly abounded not long ago in this Nation, and there be some of these yet remaining who have rolled their Garments in the Blood of the Saints: Let such take warning what Hazard they are in, if speedily they repent not, be reconciled to Holiness, and practise it in their Conversation; if this be neglected, God will at length reach such as Pharaoh, who sunk among mighty Waters like a Stone; as Passur that great Persecutor, who smote Jeremiah, and put him in the Stocks; whom the Lord made *Mager-missabih*, a Terror to himself, and to all his Friends; as Jezebel, thrown out of a Window and eaten of Dogs: And in a Word, it is rare to see Persecutors escape without the avenging Hand of God bringing them to an untimely End.

Now for Conviction of all such here as are void of Holiness, tho' all the Members of this Honourable Assembly be chargeable with great Short-comings in their Attainments; yet I hope some are advancing in the Practice of Holiness. But I fear some may come under the former Ranks condescended upon, I may say with the Apostle, 1. Cor. 11. 18. *I hear that there be such things among you, and I partly believe it.* Therefore allow me to drop a Word from the Lord for Conviction of such, and I charge you as in the Presence of God, that ye suffer the Word of Exhortation. The whole that can be said for your Conviction that are grossly profane Mockers and Persecutors of Holiness, is all wrapt up in one Word in my Text, *No Man of you shall see the Lord*, be your Condition here never so High or so Honourable, yet if destitute of Holiness; ye are of all Men most miserable; and that, 1. In this World ye can enjoy no Sight of the Lord in Duties and Ordinances, no Interview of the King in his Beauty. Neither, 2. At Death, for then your Misery shall unvail it self. 3. Through Eternity, ye shall never see the Lord but in Wrath.

First, Here in Time, O miserable Men, the Curse of God that is Glorious in Holiness is denounced against you that want Holiness; because ye want it, ye are cursed in every thing, 1. Your Estates, Wealth, Riches be great, but all accursed, Dent. 28. 17, 18: *Cursed in the City, cursed in the Field, cursed shall be thy Basket, and thy Store.* 2. Cursed in your honourable Titles and Designations, Prov. 10. 7. *The Memory of the just is blessed, but the Name of the wicked shall rot.* 3. Cursed in your Houses and Families, Prov. 3. 33. *The curse of the Lord is in the House of the Wicked.* What matter how fairly garnished,

garnished and well furnished, if the Curse of God be a part of the Plenishing, this is enough to blast the Beauty, and eat up the Timber and Stones thereof, Zech. 5. 4. All religious Duties, and every external Performance are cursed to you, the Word ye hear that is the *savour of Life* to others, which rents the Vail, and gives them to behold in his Beauty and Glory, it is the *savour of Death* to you. The Foundation and Ground of all these Curses, and of all your Misery, is, that ye are under the unpardoned Guilt of all your Sins, who are not sanctified, cannot be justified, this may occasion dreadful Torments of Conscience, it made *Judas* seek Ease by a Rope, and prefer Hell Torments to the Anguish of his own Conscience.

Secondly, You that want *Holiness* are Enemies to it, hate it and persecute it, when ye come within Sight of that ghastly King of Terrors *Death*, then ye shall see your miserable Condition; It is easie now to brave it out, when attended with Advantages of Earthly Satisfaction and Pleasures, but when *Death* puts Summons in your Hands, then 1. Conscience opens her black Books of Accounts, thy Lies, thy Oaths, thy Railings, thy Worsdom, Drunkenness, Pride, Revellings, and the like Evils, are then laid before thee, What Horror will then possess thy vile unholy Soul? No Art of Man can conceive, nor Tongue of Men nor Angels can express. 2. The Devil who now sings thee fast asleep with deluding Dreams, will then aggregate thy Sins, and set before thee the Curses and Judgments due to thee, for the same, and thereby drive thee to Despair. 3. *Death* puts an End to all thy Wordly Comforts and Contentments, which must all die with thee, as to thy Use and Comfort of them. Then 1. Fatewel carnal Mirth; no more *Chanting at the Sound of the Kiol*, lying on Beds of Ivory, and drinking Wine in Bowls. 2. Then thou must part with thy God *Mammon*, Wealth and Riches, it will fare with the Rich and Wealthy, but unholy Soul, as with a Horse that carries his Masters Bags of Money all Day, which is taken from him at Night, and he shut up in a foul Stable; So shall thou at the Night of Death, thy Bags of Gold, Money and Estate, shall be taken from thee, and thou stabled in Hell. 3. Then thou must part with all Opportunities of Grace and Holiness, Prayer, Preaching and Sabbaths, which thou mocked and despised. Now, the Lord calls, *Be holy as I am holy, turn from your evil ways, come to me, but ye pull back the shoulder*, refuse to hearken to his Voice from Sabbath to Sabbath. But ere long not a Sabbath, not a Sermon, nor Offer of Grace any more, not one Word of Holiness, Grace, Peace, Mercy, or Hope, for ever and ever, and then thou may cry for Sabbaths, or Offers of Christ, but shall not find them: Then this will lighten thy Misery, that to be Holy and Happy was in thy Offer, Christ, Grace and Glory was proponed to thee, but thou slighted the Day of Grace, and now there is no Hope, having by thy Sins shut Heaven on thy Soul, so that thou shalt never see his Face any more.

Thirdly, After *Death* leaves thee, Judgment will find thee swaggering in the Devil's Livery, in stead of the Robes of Holiness. There thou shalt see the Lord as a terrible Judge, with a Lion-like Rage against thee, and thou receiving thy Doom, shall be instantly sent to the Bottom of the burning Lake, to swim rolled in Rivers of Fire and Brimstone, till that Day when Body and Soul shall be Re-united, 2 Cor. 5. 10. When we must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. O unholy Souls! What will come of you here without *Holiness*? Then shall be a Separation betwixt the Holy and Profane, and when the Former shall flee up to the air to meet the Lord, the latter shall be dragged by devils into his presence; and there hear the Books opened, and the

the Wickedness of their Lives read openly, and ye shall stand Speechless before your Judge, having not a word to say, but stand trembling before God's Tribunal, where thou shalt see Mercy, Love and Favour veiled, the Justice of the Law, and the Honour of Divine Vengeance freely Represented, and that fearful Sentence of Baile from his Presence passed, *Matth. 25. 41. Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* Every word carries Terror in it, and breathes nothing but Wo and Misery, Fire and Brimstone. So much for Conviction of such as are void of Holiness.

The second, Of Exhortation, I must confess my self of all that bear my Character the most Unworthy; My appearance before this *Holy and Honourable Assembly* is not of Choice, but by the Authority of the Church interposed, to be Obsequious to which, obliges me to cross my own Inclination.

I come now, Right Honourable, with a Message from the Eternal God to you; And that is, in the Name of my Lord and Master, and by his Authority to charge home upon your Consciences, that you be Students of Holiness, your selves, and contribute in your high Stations to Promove and Advance it in others; And that with this Divine Certification and Writings in the Text, that *without this no man of you shall ever see the Lord.* What I have said for Conviction of those who are void of, and Enemies to Holiness, might abundantly serve to enforce the Study of Holiness, as indispensably necessary, yet I shall leave with you, First, Some few further Considerations to press it. 2^d, Shall conclude with a few Directions.

Consider First, That Real Holiness is the Honour and Glory of the Creature, all your other Honours and Dignities are miserably soiled without this; The Lord hath knit Holiness and Honour inseparably together, *1 Thess. 4. 4. Dem. 26. v. last.* There is nothing lifts up a People so high, and makes them so truly Famous and Glorious, as Holiness: Righteousness exalts a Nation, it is the Strength, the Honour and Riches of a People, as God's Holiness is his Glory, so Holiness is the Glory of any Creature; great swelling Titles without Holiness, are but so many Advantages that Satan hath over the Enjoyers of them; Honour without Holiness, is but a Wind that blows a Man the sooner to Hell. 2^d, Consider that Real Holiness is of a most attractive Soul-engaging and alluring Nature, it is like a Box of Ointment broken, the Perfume whereof, diffuseth it self with Pleasure and Delight; it made Moses and Stephen's Face to shine. 3^d, Holiness makes a Man an Ornament both to Persons and Places, to which he stands related, the Holiness of the Prince is an Ornament to the People, *Ezekiel* was a throne of glory to his father's house, *Isa. 22. 23.* Yea, they are an Honour to the Places where they are born or bred, *Psal. 87. 5, 6. It of Zion shall be said, This and that man was born there.* God loves the very Ground they tread upon, they reflect Honour on the Places of their Abode; Melancthon was called, *The Phoenix of Germany*, and Luther, *The glory of the Age he lived in.* 4th, Holiness makes a Man a common Blessing to a Land or Church, the greater, the greater Blessing, all in Laman's Family sared the better for Jacob's sake, and all in the City of Zoar for Lot's, and all in the Court and Country of Egypt for Joseph's; Holy Elijah was the Chariot and Horse-men of Israel.

I shall now conclude with a few Directions, First, How to advance Personal Holiness. Secondly, How to promote National Holiness and Reformation in Church and State, where-in you are so much concerned, as Representatives.

In order to advance Personal Holiness in your own Souls, with all Deference I would advise, First, That you be convinced of your want of Holiness, and of the dangerous

and damnable State of your Souls without it; ye shall never see the Lord. 25. Then throw down your selves at God's Foot-stool, crying, *Behold I am vile*, lift up the Abominations ye are guilty of, whether in your Personal VValk, as Swearing, Drinking, or Debauching; Or in publick Capacities, what Accession in the late times ye had to shedding so much innocent Blood, to breaking down and defacing the Work of God in the Land, to tearing and burning the Contract betwixt God and this covenanted Church. O Repent! I will not say that Scotland is now in a Covenanted Frame, but still by Fasting and Mourning over former Breaches, we be brought to a Frame to Renew it, I fear God's Controversy be at no End with us. 26. Make sure your Interest in Jesus Christ, if your Souls be filled with Tears of Godly Sorrow, it will lead you to submit to the Righteousness of Christ by Faith, and till this be done, ye cannot obtain Holiness that is Heavens Livery. 45. Set the Lord always before you, Psal. 16. 8. Thus David became Eminent in Holiness, Psal. 119. 168. *I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee.* 55. Put Respect on Gospel Ordinances, attend them Conscientiously, as necessary Means of advancing in Holiness, 1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new born babes desire the pure milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.* Love that Ministry best which endeavours most to promote Holiness, some love Ministers rather to Please than to Profit, to tickle the Ears than to touch the Hearts. 65. Take Pleasure in the Converse of these who are taken up in the Study of Holiness: Thus it was with a Man as truly Great as any of you, David, that Princely Prophet, who counts the Saints the excellent ones in the earth, in whom is all his delight, Psal. 16. 3. A Spark passes for enflaming Souls with Love to Christ in such Societies, Luke 24. 32. 75. Be Men much in secret Prayer; this is a Duty almost worn out of Fashion in our Day, but an Heart poured out in a Closet is God's Delight, Song 2. 14. *As secret Moles are Fanning, so secret Duties are Soul-enriching.* 85. Endeavour to Crucifie your raging Corruptions and darling Lusts, till you part with these Predominants, your Souls can never thrive in Grace and Holiness.

Secondly, Allow me, Most Noble Patriots, to lay before you as your Duty to contribute your utmost in these high and honourable Stations, for advancing Holiness in Church and State, by an Universal and National Reformation in both; you have God's Command for this, and the Pattern of Zealous Rulers and Governours, Ezra 5. 1. compared with Chap. 6. v. 12. Believe it, Right Honourable, Reformation and Holiness, if Zealously set about, should prove the strongest Bull-works for this Nation. In order to this End, I would humbly offer, First, That ye beware of a Thing commonly called Policy, which shreds it self under fairest Names, yet with blackest Designs: It doth with Religion as Amnon did with Tamar, when it hath served its Turn by it, it thrusts it out of Doors: Jeroboam, to preserve the Kingdom, set up the Calves of Dan and Bethel. It is the greatest Policy to save a tottering State, and this is no way done, but by a through Reformation. 25. In order to promoting a Work of Reformation and Holiness, take an effectual Course to have the excellent Laws in favour thereof put to Execution. That this be committed to Men of Integrity and Honesty, and not to Men Imporal and Vicious in their Practice, or disaffected to both Church and State. 35. Put to your Power for freeing the Church of a scandalous, ignorant and supinely negligent Ministry, which be the greatest Barriers in the Way of any Reformation. 45. If you would have National Reformation advanced, then begin with your selves, God would not have David build his Temple, because he had his Hands in Blood; That is, he had shed the Blood of Uriah. In the Blood of how many Uriahs have some

of this Generation washen their Hands? I warn such, if any of you be here, that without Repentance, the Wrath of God shall overtake you, and ye shall inevitably Perish, and never be Honoured to be a Zealous Reformer, for all that a Man doth under Pretext of Religion and Reformation, *without Holiness*, is but meer Policy, and can be reckoned nothing but an *Enemy saving Taxes* in all his Consults and Actings. 5b, Account it your greatest Honour, and the surest Expedient for entailing a Blessing on your selves and Posterity, zealously to put forth your selves for God in promoting a Work of Reformation and Holiness in Church and State, be not weary of Christ's Scepter, and of living under his Government, believe it, it is the only Liberty; and Subjection to your Lusts, is the only Bondage. If ye Honour God he will Honour you, be not Jealous, as if Christ's Government would Eclipse your Greatness, Christ's Rule and your Honours are not incompatible. 6b, Believe it, that Reformation and Holiness is the most effectual Mean for advancing the true Interests both of King and Country, and will contribute to Unite you in laying both impartially *in an even balance*, and will keep you from violating that which is joyned by Contract betwixt the King and his People. I hope no honest *Scot* Man dare but say we owe him grateful Returns, as an Instrument highly honoured and employed by God, in doing great Things for this Church and Nation, and may undoubtedly expect that he will lay forth himself to Regard the Honour and Interest of the Country. Now, That the great God may bless all that is said to enforce on your Consciences the great Study of *Holiness*, *without which not a man among you shall ever see the Lord*: Let us join in Prayer to ask it of him.

Here ends the
Parliament
Sermon.

I come next to the Enforcing Motive in the Text, *without which no man shall see the Lord*: Where consider, 1. The Privilege of Saints, they shall see the Lord. 2. The Misery of unholy Sinners, they shall never see the Lord.

I begin with the First, It is the Saints Privilege to see the Lord, 1. Here in Time; 2. Hereafter in Glory.

For understanding how holy Souls see the Lord while in this World, I shall 1. Shew what kind of Sight it is they do enjoy. 2. What glorious Things they do see. 3. What are the Properties of this Sight. 4. Who are allowed to enjoy it. 5. Why the Lord allows it.

First, What kind of Sight of God do Believers enjoy in this World? To this I Answer, First, *Negatively*: This Sight 1. Is not a Sight with the Bodily-eye, in this Sense *no man hath seen God, nor can see*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. There is no Proportion betwixt so Spiritual an Object and the Bodily Organ. Neither 2. Is this Sight adequate and compleat, Finite Creatures cannot discover an Infinite Being to the full, *Job 11. 7. Canst thou by searching find out God, canst thou find out the Almighty and Perfection?* Neither 3. Is it a Sight only in the Works of Creation and Providence, which natural Men may see, but *cannot discern the things of God, for they are foolishness unto them*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. Neither 4. Are we to expect extraordinary Discoveries of God, such as some of the Apostles had in the Mount of Transfiguration, *Matth. Chap. 17.* and as John had in *Parnos*, when he *endited The Book of Revelation*, or as Paul, when ravished *to the third Heavens*, and *heard things unspeakable, which is not lawful for a Man to utter*. God hath ceased to give such extraordinary Manifestations in these latter Days, when the Canon of the Scripture is compleat, and the Gospel preached through the World; and to expect them, is to expose our selves to Temptations and Enthusiastick Delusions. Neither 5. Is it such as is to be enjoyed in Heaven above, 1 Cor. 13. 12. *Now we see through*

through a glass, darkly, but then face to face: Of this *Heavenly Vision* I shall speak after-
ward.

But now I come to shew *Positively*, What kind of Sight of God Believers enjoy in this World. And 1. It is a Sight by the Eye of Faith, Which is the Substance of Things not seen, the Evidence of Things hoped for. Heb. 11. 1. This noble Grace gives a Taste of God's Goodness, and an Experience of his Power. 2. It is a Sight by the Eye of Hope, expecting good Things from God. 2 Chron. 20. 12. Psal. 123. 2. Our eyes wait on the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us. 3. It is a Sight by saving Experience, the Believer tastes and sees that God is good. Psal. 34. 8. He finds the Accomplishment of the choice, cordial Covenant Promises in his daily Experience, that God hears his Prayers, supports him in Distress, strengthens him in Duty, and makes him a Gainer by Afflictions. 4. It is a Sight by an Understanding, savingly Inlightned, 2 Cor. 3. 18. We with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory. We behold the Lord not in obscure Types, Shadows and Prophecies, by which he was revealed under the Old Testament, but in the Glass of the Gospel, which gives such a Sight of him, as changeth the Soul into the Image and Likeness of Christ, which shall never be blotted out, but shall advance from one Degree of Grace unto another, till we come to the full Possession of Glory. 5. It is a Sight of God by Word, the Believer's reading of the Word, Acts Chap. 8. and Enquiry after its Meaning, was a blessed Mean of his Conversion, and gaining a saving Sight of Jesus. 6. But the preached Gospel salutes the Gods going in the Sanctuary, Psal. 68. 24. They see and find the Spirit of God Inlightning the Blind, Quickning the Dead, Converting graceless Souls, Up-stirring Believers, Edifying the Body of Christ, and building them up in holiness and comfort through Faith unto Salvation. 7. By Prayer, when Jacob wrestled with God, and as a Prince prevailed, and got the Blessing, he called the Name of the Place Peniel, for there he saw God face to face. Gen. 32. 30. How sweet Discoveries of God have his People in secret Retirements? Then they get Liberty to pour out their Heart before the Lord, they overcome their Idols, they experience the Sweetness of Religion, by Faith they feed on the Promises, their Souls are warmed with Love to Christ, Hope expects good Things from him, and they are perswaded, that in the End they shall be more than conquerors. 8. God is to be seen in the Sacraments, at Baptism the Spirit was seen to descend on Christ as a dove; In the Lords Supper Believers see the blessed Jesus in his Crimson coloured Robe, they see how by his bloody Sufferings he hath satisfied Justice, overcome Sin, Satan, Death, Hell and the Grave; They sit down under his Shadow with great delight, and find his fruit sweet to their taste.

Secondly, I am to shew what glorious Things Believers do see when God discovereth himself to them in a present World? Now, these are so very many, as I can but name a few of them; As, 1. Sometimes they get a View of the glorious Divine Perfections, The Lord passeth by, and proclaims himself merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, Exod. 34. 6, 7. They see his Compassion extended to the worst of Sinners, upon Condition of Repentance, his Power interposed for supporting them against all their mighty Foes; his Patience, in passing by Injuries, and delaying to inflict deserved Judgment; his Love, extending from Eternity to Eternity; his Greatness, to terrify them from Sin; his Goodness, to allure to Duty; and his All-sufficiency, to supply all their Wants and Wants. 2. Sometimes they get a Sight of the Glory of Christ, Isa. 33. 17.

Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty. John 1. 16. *We behold his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* They see there is a breadth, a length, a depth and height in the love of Christ; which passeth knowledge. That he instructs them by his sweet Doctrine, Covers them by his dear-purchased Righteousness, Protects by his Power, Directs by his Example, is Surety for Divour Debtors, Saviour for lost Sinners, Physician for sick Souls; that he enlightens the Blind, Strengthens the Weak, Comforts the Discouraged, Delivers the Prisoner from Satan's Fetters, and in a word, *Is all, and in all*, to all his own People. 3. Sometimes they get a Sight of God's glorious Law, ye may see it exceeding broad, including the Duty of all Persons, in all Places, Stations and Relations; exceeding Holy, as teaching our Duty to God glorious in Holiness; Just, in our Duties to our Neighbours; Good and Useful, in all the Duties toward your selves. 4. Ye may get a View of God's glorious Works of Creation, Providence and Redemption, which may make you Sing, as in *Revel. 15. 3, 4.* *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who will not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name?* His Works of Creation are Beautiful in their Order, in their Variety, in their Usefulness and Subserviency to their End: The Sun is made to rule by Day, and the Moon by Night, and all the Stars in their Courses; Yea, should Man look no further than himself, he may have Ground to say, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well,* *Psalm 139. 14.* The Lord hath made Man the very Compend of the Creation, he hath given him the lower Springs of Life and Sense, as Animals, and the upper Springs of an Immortal Soul, like Angels, he hath furnished the World for his Use; and what is man that thou art thus mindful of him? God's Works of Providence are also Beautiful, he hath a glorious Design in them all, *Prov. 16. 4.* and takes always the most effectual Way to accomplish it, notwithstanding a seeming Variety of Providences, yet there is no Inconsistency, yea, his most bitter Dispensations are for the Good of his Church and People. But above all, the Work of Redemption is Beautiful, this makes the Perfections of God shine with a more wonderful Lustre, Justice is satisfied, in exacting Punishment of Christ; Mercy, in Pardoning the guilty Sinner; Wisdom, in overthrowing Satan by the same Nature, that sinned; Patience, in delaying to execute VVrath; Faithfulness, in performing the Promises: And Love could go no higher than this, *God so loved the world, that he gave his own Son;* God's Power could have created many VVorlds, but he had but one only begotten Son whom he gave for lost Sinners. By this VVork of Redemption, Glory arises to the three Persons of the blessed God-head; to the Father who contrived the VVork, who gave the Elect to Christ to be Redeemed, who assisted Christ in, and accepted of what he did, and who committed the whole Management of the Work to Christ, *John 5. 22.* Glory redounds to the Son, who freely did undertake, and willingly did lay down his Life for us, who is gone to Heaven to see his Purchase applied; who will come again to bestow the Inheritance on all for whom it was designed, and reign as the Head of all the Elect Company for ever and ever. Glory redounds to the Blessed Spirit, in uniting the Divine and Humane Nature in Christ's Person, in pouring out a Super-abundant Measure of all Gifts and Graces on Christ's Humane Nature, *1st. 11. 2, 3, 4.* and in concurring with, and applying the whole VVork of Redemption to Elect Souls. And Finally, By Christ's Death in our Room and in our Nature, Man's Salvation is secured, and that upon a surer Foundation than Adam had never sinned: Christ is now the Cautioner of the Covenant, and since he will not fail, the Elects Salvation cannot fail. 5. Believers may gain a Sight of

of their noble Privileges, that they are the Objects of God's Love, *Jer. 31. 3.* clothed with Christ's Righteousness, *Revel. 19. 8.* Chosen out of the World, *John 14. 19.* The Lord's Jewels, *Mal. 3. 17.* Yea, his Sons and Daughters, *2 Cor. 6. 18.* And in a word, have a Right to all things, *1 Cor. 3. 21, 22.* They possess many Mercies, but have a Title to all Mercies in the World to come; tho' they have not all in Possession, yet they have all in Expectation and Reversion. To conclude, 6. They may have a *Pisgah* Sight of the Land of Glory afar off, *Isa. 33. 17.* Such a View as may make their Conversation Heavenly, and that they long for the full Enjoyment of the purchased Inheritance, where they shall be free of Sin, or Temptation to it, and their Souls Holy, as Christ is Holy.

Thirdly, I proposed to name some of the Properties of these Sights; As 1. These are not Permanent but Transient, *The Clouds return after the Rain*; Ye who have got near Christ, lay your Account, that Satan will seek to have you, that he may winnow you as wheat. 2. They are Heart-ravishing, as the very Suburbs of Heaven, *Gen. 28. 17.* This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven. 3. They are peculiar to the Saints, *Prov. 14. 10.* A stranger doth not intermeddle with this joy. 4. Powerful, to support the Believer in Distresses, to comfort the Comfortless, to assist in Duty, to instruct under Darkness, quicken under Deadness, and to strengthen under Weakness. 5. God is very Sovereign in dispensing of them, he gives not alike Measure of them to all Saints, nor to one and the same Saint at all times. 6. These are not Immediate, but through the Glass of Ordinances and Duties, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* 7. These are humbling Sights, *Job 42. 5, 6.* Now mine eyes see thee, wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes, *Isaiah Chap. 6.* When he sees the Lord sitting on the Throne, Cries, *Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell among a people of unclean lips.* 8. These Sights raise an insatiable, longing and Divine Pressure after more of his Presence, *Psal. 119. 20.* My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. Yea, these Foretastes make the Soul long for the full Enjoyment of God in Glory, as old Simeon speaks, *Luke 2. 29, 30.* Now lettest thou thy servant depart in Peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. And Paul groaned earnestly, *To be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven,* *2 Cor. 5. 2.* I proceed

Fourthly, To enquire what Eyes shall see these blessed Sights? Answer 1. They must be pure, *Math. 5. 8.* Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. The Mind must be pure from any Mixture of allowed Sin; As, in Nature, if the Eye be affected with any vitious Quality or Humour, the Sight is Obstructed; So in Grace, The natural man cannot know the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 2. They must be Meek and Humble Eyes, Pride keeps from this Sight, *Psal. 10. 4.* The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God. But the Lord's People, their heart is not haughty, nor their eyes lofty, *Psal. 131. 1.* They see enough of Evil in themselves to humble them, and whatever is Good they receive it of the Lord. 3. Sublime and raised Eyes, some way proportioned to the Glory of the Object that is to be seen, Souls who have high Thoughts of precious Christ, shall receive Discoveries of his Glory. 4. Vigilant and watchful Eyes, that carefully guard against Sin and Satan's Snares, *Luke 12. 39, 40.* 5. Experimental and feeling Eyes, the Eye is the most sensible Part, most full of Animal Spirits, the least Dust in the Eye, what dolorous Sense will it make? And a glorious Sight will create ravishing Joy; So the Soul that shall see the Lord, is affected and grieved with the Sight of Sin, is glad and rejoiceth at the Discovery of Christ's Beauty, *John 8. 56.* 6. Eyes that

shall see the Lord; are such as mourn for Sin and Christ's Absence, and by Faith look to the Lord for his Mercy and Favour, *Lam. 1. 16. Chap. 3. 49, 50. Psal. 24. 5.*

Fifthly, I shall give some Reasons, why the Lord allows Saints such glorious Sights? As, 1. They diligently seek for them, *Moses Prays, I beseech thee shew me thy glory, Exod. 33. 18.* and *David Prays, To see God's glory and power, as he had seen it in the Sanctuary, Psal. 63. 3.* Now, such humble fervent Prayers the Lord will hear. 2. He hath promised it, *Isa. 33. 17.* and there is a Promise implied in the Text, upon these Promises the Saints depend, and build their Comfort, and the Lord will never disappoint them. 3. The Lord hereby discovers, there is an unspeakable Gain in Godliness, his People in this Life have more solid Comfort than the wicked World; These Sights of Christ's Beauty warm their Hearts with Love to him, Support them in Trouble, Comfort them in Discouragement, engage them to Praise God here, and to long for an immediate Sight of him in Glory, where they shall Praise him *World without end.* 4. To Encourage his Friends to serve him cheerfully in an evil World, since his Service hath such a Reward attending it; Which, if ye want, it is your Sin that murther your Mercy, and ~~your~~ your Comfort: But if ye enjoy it, how should it engage you to be Tender, ~~ye~~ ye grieve his Spirit by your unholy Practice, to value your Privilege, to be useful to others in your Station, to meditate on his Goodness, to bless him for it, and to plead that these Discoveries of his Love may not be removed, till ye arrive at the full Enjoyment of himself, where ye shall see, *not through a glass darkly, but face to face.* This leads me to

The second Part of this Privilege in the Text, holy Souls shall see the Lord in Glory:

This immediate Vision in Eternity, is more glorious than what Believers have by Faith here in Time, *While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, for we walk by faith not by sight, 2 Cor. 5. 6, 7. But there face to face.* And we can but speak at a Distance of it, it will not be understood till that Day the Soul enters through the gates into the city above; they who reach thither are only proper to tell what it is. Only I may give a Hint, *First*, Of the Nature of this Sight. *Secondly*, Of its Object.

As to the *First*, There will be a seeing of God *face to face*, a Knowledge of the Divine Essence in a measure proportioned to the enlarged Capacity of the glorified Soul, so as the Soul may be able to comprehend an Answer to that great Question, *What is God?* There shall be satisfying *Apprehensions*, tho' no perfect *Comprehensions* of the Divine Essence. 2. In this Sight they shall clearly discern these deep Mysteries which they racked their Thoughts on, but could not penetrate in this Life, as what the Union of the two Natures in the Person of our *Emmanuel* is, the manner of the Subsistence of each Person in the most glorious and undivided God-head, the several Attributes of God will then be unfolded to our Understandings, *Revel. 4. 8, 9, 10, 11.* O ravishing Sight! 3. Such a Sight as shall be infinitely more sweet than all the Views we had here of him by Faith: There is indeed a *Joy unspeakable* in the Visions of Faith, *1 Pet. 1. 8.* But far short it comes of that immediate Vision, *Revel. 22. 4.* All the Men on Earth cannot give a compleat Commentary on that one Text, *The Throne of the Lamb shall be as it, and they shall see his Face.* We through the Key-hole get but a Glimpse of his Countenance, Earth cannot bear such immediate Sights. 4. The Sight of him there, will be Appropriative and Applicative, see him as our own God and Portion; Were it not thus, a Sight of him would never be Beatifical and Satisfying; Sight without Interest, is dreadful.

It may be enquired, What is the Difference betwixt the Sight of God here, and hereafter in Glory? Answer, 1. Any Sight we have here is by Faith, Heb. 11. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 7. but in Heaven Faith is swallowed up in immediate Vision, there we see what here we only believe. 2. Here our Sights are sadly mist, every Grace has its contrary Corruption as a Clog on its Heel, Rom. 7. 21. *When I would do good, evil is present with me*, but above Grace is as crystal Streams from the purest Fountain. 3. Here our Grace acts imperfectly, not in the highest and most intense Degree, when Love to God is most fervent, there is still some Coldness and Remissness in it; who comes up to that Rule? *Matth. 22. 37. Then shall love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind*, but in Heaven it shall be so for ever. 4. Who see him most here, have their frequent and daily Interruptions, the Necessities of their Bodies as well as the Defectiveness of their Graces requires it to be so; but there they shall serve him Day and Night in his Temple, Rev. 7. 15. 5. Here ravishing Sights when enlarged with spiritual Comforts, need presently some humbling Providence to hide Pride from our Eyes, 2 Cor. 12. 7. *Left I should be exalted above Measure, through the Abundance of the Revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the Flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me*; when Holy Bernard seemed enlarged, his Heart cried, *Bene fecisti Bernarde, O well done, Bernard*: But in Heaven the highest Comforts are enjoyed with the greatest Humility, and the intire Glory is ascribed to God without any unworthy Defalcations; all the heavenly Quire cry, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power*. 6. Here we have Variety of Duties of different Kinds and Natures to perform; but there only one Kind, praising, loving and delighting in God; no groaning, sighing, mortifying, praying nor searching Work.

Secondly, The Object of this Sight is the Lord, where consider, 1. The Glory and Beauty to be seen in his Person, 2 Cor. 4. 6. *We see the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ*: For, 1. His Person absolutely considered, is the essential Image of God, Heb. 1. 3. *The Brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person*. This is the Rock of our Religion whereupon the Church is built, the Ground of all our Hopes of Salvation. 2. The mysterious Constitution of his Person, the hypostatick personal Union of God and Man in their distinct Natures, this is the Glory of our Religion and Spring of our Comfort, the Mystery that Angels desire to look into. 2. Consider the Glory and Excellency appears in him as Mediator, and that, First, In his Susception and Undertaking these Offices as our Redeemer; in Heaven ye shall see the Lord in the Glory, Beauty and Excellency of infinite Condescension, it did not befall him by Lot, it was not imposed upon him against his Will, it belonged not to him by Necessity of Nature or Condition, he stood in no need of it, but of his infinite Goodness he willingly yielded, Phil. 2. 5. to v. 9. This is the more wonderful in Respect of the infinite Distance that is betwixt his Essence and Nature and the Creatures, *All Nations before him are but as the small Drop of a Bucket, and Dust of the Ballance*. And in Respect of the infinite Self-sufficiency unto all the Ages and Ends of his own eternal Blessedness, the whole Creation cannot add one Mite to his Satisfaction, Job 35. 5, 6, 7, 8. hence appears his Condescendency in undertaking for us. 2. In the Discharge of his Offices, he is the Sun of Righteousness who gave Light to the blinded Sinner, his Blood spake Peace to a trembling Conscience condemned by the Law, he delivered Sinners who were bound Captive under Satan the worst of Tyrant's Slavery. 3. In Glory the Saints shall see the Event and Consequence of the Discharge of these his Offices, they shall see his glorious Exaltation; where that very humane Nature it self which he took on him

in this World is exalted into Glory; but what is the true Nature of the Glorification of the Humanity, we here cannot perfectly comprehend; only this is sure, the Nature of the Man Christ is filled with all the Divine Graces and Perfections, whereof a limited created Nature is capable: As to the Substance of the Glory of the humane Nature of Christ, Believers shall see it, and be made Partakers of it, *for we shall see him, and be like him*, tho' not of the same Measure and Degree, yet shall have perfect and real Grace of the same Kind and Nature, how should the Hope of this Blessedness press all to the Practice of Holiness. I come to

The second Part of this Motive, namely, That unholy Souls shall never see the Lord; this future Sight doth depend peremptorily on our present Holiness, not as the meritorious Cause of it, for be we never so Holy, yet in Respect of God, *we are unprofitable Servants*, Luke 17. 10. *Eternal Life is the Gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord*, Rom. 6. 23. But it doth so, 1. On the Account of an Eternal, Unchangeable, Divine Constitution. God hath enacted it as an eternal Law, that Holiness shall be the Way of attaining Happiness. 2. As it is a due Preparation for it, the Soul being by Holiness made meet to be Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, Col. 3. 12, 13. 3ly, Never any did attain Heaven without Holiness, all Believers from the bruised Reed to the tallest Cedar, from the smoking Flax on Earth to the flaming Lamp in Heaven, from Thomas who would not believe without seeing, to Abraham who did believe without staggering were really Holy; and all the Ungodly from the most beautiful Moralist, to the most venomous Toad in Nature's Field, from the young Man in the Gospel, who was not far from the Kingdom of Heaven, to Judas who was in the Bottom of Hell, are really Unholy. 4ly, It is unconceivable by any Man in his right Wits, that an unholy Soul should see the Lord, it is contrair to God's Holiness to suffer an unholy Sinner to have Communion with him, Psal. 11. 6, 7. *Upon the wicked he shall rain Snakes, Fire and Brimstone; for the righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, and his Countenance beholds the Upright*: God's Wisdom will not allow that these who do the Devil's Work should sit at Christ's Table, his Faithfulness is also engaged to see all the Threats of his Word made good against unholy Souls. 5ly, Without Holiness none can be fit for Glory, holy Service is troublefom and uneasy to a carnal Mind in this Life, how much more in Heaven where it must be performed, without the least Intermission? to attend the Lamb of God, Praise, Love and Admire his Excellency, is Work wherein an unholy carnal Mind, hath no Pleasure. Adam was first formed before he was brought to the Garden of Eden, Man must be reformed and renewed by Grace before he be brought to Heaven, its Antitype; it is impossible for an unholy Soul to relish heavenly Delights, *To the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled nothing is pure*. Therefore ye who are unholy and profane in Heart and Life, never feed your selves with the Hopes of Happiness; for if ye die in this Condition, ye shall be secluded of Christ's Presence to Eternity, 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9. and tho' now ye care not for the Enjoyment of God, yet in Hell it shall be a great Part of your Torment, that ye are for ever deprived of it, Luke 16. 22, 23. O then cry for Soul renewing and converting Grace, and be willing to embrace Christ according to the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, that ye may not lie under this unspeakable Misery of never seeing the Lord.

HEBREWS

H E B R E W S XII. Verse 15.

Looking diligently, lest any Man fail of the Grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

AFTER the Apostle had directed to some necessary Duties, and pressed them by strong Arguments, he comes in this Text to put us on our Guard against some Sins contrair to the former Duties, which if they be not opposed, will inevitably ruin our Profession. In the Text we may consider two Parts, First, A weighty Duty enjoined, *Looking diligently.* 2ly, Some Evils to be prevented in the Exercise of this Duty; as, 1. *Lest any Man fail of the Grace of God.* 2. *Lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.* There is a Gradation in the Evil here pointed at from the lesser to the greater.

The Duty enjoined in the Original is expressed in one Word, *ἐπιμενετε*, by our Translators, it is well rendered *Look diligently*, it is used, 1 Pet. 5. 2. to hold out the Duty of Church Officers; here to express the common charitable Duty of all Believers as they are called to it by Occasions and Circumstances with Reference to others, and always that they look to themselves; the Word signifies a careful Inspection, and that for the promoting and advancing some spiritual Good, and for preventing every thing that is spiritually or morally Evil. To this End it is specially applied by the Apostle in this Text, and in the following Verse, *Look diligently,* 1. *Lest any Man fail of the Grace of God.* 2. *Lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you.* 3. *Lest there be any Fornicator.* 4. *Or profane Person as Esau.*

The first of these Evils to be prevented, is, *Lest any Man fail of the Grace of God;* where consider, 1. That by the Grace of God we are to understand God's gracious Favour and Acceptance in Christ, including all spiritual Mercies and Privileges, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Peace, Love, Joy, Perseverance offered to us in the Gospel. 2. To fail of this Grace, is to come short of enjoying it. The Word *ἐκλείπει* signifies sometimes to Want, or be Deficient, *Matth. 19. 20. Luke 15. 29.* Sometimes to come behind, 1 Cor. 1. 7. 2 Cor. 11. 5. sometimes to fail, or come short of, *Rom. 3. 23. Heb. 4. 1.* but never to fall from; so that final Apostacy from real Grace, can no way be proven by this Text: The Apostle only signifies, that there were many in that Church who had a Profession of the Gospel, and yet through Negligence and Unbelief were Strangers to the real saving Grace of God. From this all other Evils do proceed.

The second Evil diligently to be prevented, is, *Lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.* Where consider, First, What this Root of bitterness is, and by it the Apostle evidently alludes to that Word, *Deut. 29. 18. Lest there should be among you Man or Woman, or Family, or Tribe, whose Heart turneth away this Day from the Lord our God, to go and serve other gods of these Nations; lest there should be among*

you a Root that beareth Gall and Wormwood. Gall or Hemlock was a poisonous Weed in Eastern Countries, *Hosea* 10. 4. and is applied to signifye poisonous Sins, *Amos* 6. 12. *Deut.* 32. 32. And in this Text this Root of bitterness signifies Persons in the Church inclining to Apostacy, and to depart from God and the Profession of the Gospel, either by turning to *Judaism*, or other Errors, or to a profane sensual Life. And it is called a Root, 1. Because as Roots under the Ground cannot be discovered till they spring up, so is this hidden in the Heart of Men. 2. It is from this evil Heart of Unbelief the whole Evil of Apostacy proceeds; as, *First*, From its proper Root. 2ly, This bitter Root springs up, this is the natural Way whereby a Root discovers it self what it is, and of what Nature: Tho' the Root of Apostacy may for a while conceal and hide, yet at length it discovers it self, and frequently by neglecting Church Assemblies, and perverse Disputings against the Truth. 3ly, Consider the Fruits flowing from this bitter Root, the first Effect of it is Trouble, it brings Confusion and Disorder, it occasions, 1. The eternal Ruine of Souls, and this cannot but be grieving to the Godly, to see Men fully ruining themselves. 2. It occasions Trouble by stirring up wrangling Differences to draw away Disciples, and bring the Church to Disorder. 3. It brings an evil Report upon the Church for Division, Contention and Instability, and frequently brings on outward Trouble and Persecution. A second sad Fruit of this Root of Apostacy and Error springing up, is, thereby many may be defiled, the Ignorance, Negligence and Want of Experience in Professors make them easie to be imposed upon, thus Error spreads like a Gangrene, and many Visible Churches do fall to Apostacy, and if this be duly considered, it should make all Persons in their Stations diligently endeavour to prevent the springing up of this bitter Root, and carefully to nip it in the Bud. From this Text

Observe 1. That the rich Offers of the precious Grace of God, are freely proposed to all the Hearers of the Gospel.

Observe 2. That under the Drop of the Gospel People may have an external Profession, many outward Performances and attainments, and yet come short of real Grace, deluding and cheating their own Souls.

Observe 3. That it is the necessary Duty of every Man and Woman under the Gospel, to have a watchful and accurate Eye over themselves, and in their Stations and respective Relations over others, that they come not short of the real Grace of God, but be solidly confirmed and established therein.

Observe 4. That Profaneness, and Error is a bitter Root, which springing up, may trouble the Church, and defile many Professors, and therefore should be carefully prevented and nipt in the Bud.

I begin with Observation 1. That the rich Offers of the precious Grace of God are freely proposed to all the Hearers of this Gospel.

To prepare this for our Use, let us consider, First, What is offered in this Gospel, and, 1. Christ offers his Love, such a Love as it is a wonder any Creature should be the Object of it, it is ardent, many Waters cannot quench it, the Floods of divine Wrath, and Affronts from Sinners went over his Head, yet his Love was not quenched, his Love is transcendent, no Love found in the Breast of any Creature comparable to it, his Love is everlasting like himself, *John* 13. 1. *Isa.* 54. 10. And finally, it is distinguishing Love, puts a Difference betwixt the Precious and the Vile, betwixt the Lion and the Lamb. 2. He offers himself the highest, the greatest thing Heaven can afford, God shall be thine by Covenant for ever and ever, and thou shalt be Redeemed

Hebrews XII. Verse 15.

209

page 407

by the Price of his precious Blood, 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. 1. However great and heinous, however numerous and multiplied thy Sins be, He offers a plenary Pardon and Indemnity, *Iſa.* 1. 18. Eph. 1. 7. What more desirable Mercy to a guilty Criminal, than the King's Remission? Lo, it is in thy Offer: Freedom from the Curse of the Law, and the Vengeance of Heaven is offered in this Gospel to thee, if thou wilt accept Christ, *Gal.* 3. 13, 14. 4. Christ offers the Gifts and Graces of his holy Spirit, the Comforts of the Holy Ghost, to relieve thee in all Straits, support thee under all Crosses, encourage thee under all Doubts and Fears: Yea, all the rich Blessings of *Abraham* are offered to every Believer, *Gal.* 3. 14. 5. He offers his Glory and Kingdom, *Pſal.* 84. 11. *John* 17. 24. When *David* promised *Mephibosheth* to sit at his Table, How ye admire, that Christ offers to set you down with him in his Throne, to make you walk with him in white, to give you a white stone and a new name, and to eat of the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God.

Secondly, Consider who he is makes these gracious Offers; 1. He is a God of infinite Majesty, he who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, in compare to whom the Sun is but a Mass of Darkness, the whole Earth is but as the small dust in the balance; that he should stoop so low, to treat with us, is it not a wonder of Grace? 2. He is Allsufficient who hath all things within the Compass of his own Being, whereby he is infinitely Happy, whose Glory had been nothing less, tho' Man had never been created, or tho' all Men should have sunk into their first nothing. 3. He is Independent, he is so Free, so Absolute, as he cannot be obliged or necessitate; Yea, Man is so far from desiring or desiring it of him, that he is found of them that sought him not; Man refuses his Offer, resists and rebels against his Command, and yet the Lord makes him willing by a day of his power; O matchless Grace! 4. He is Sovereign, who can do what he will with his own, he might in the first Moment of Life have crushed all sinful Men, and yet we not only Live, but do Live to hear Offers of Grace and Reconciliation.

Thirdly, Consider to whom our Blessed Lord makes these gracious Offers; If it were only to Persons of Honour and Worth, they might seem less wonderful, but he offers Grace, not to Angels and Seraphims of Glory, but to contemptible Men, to dust and ashes, crushed before the moth; And shall Christ condescend to Dust, come to the Habitation of a Moth, and stand at the Door of a Worm? O matchless Grace! Yea, he offers Grace to Sinners, to Men by Sin made worse than Beasts that perish, to polluted Dust, loathsome and leprous, to Enemies who hate Christ in their Minds and Lives, and yet the Lord deals importunately with such to accept the Offers of Grace.

Fourthly, Consider how Christ proposes these Offers of Grace; And 1. He makes them very freely, it is the Concern of Sinners to come to him and seek him, and not to look that he should come to them: It is so among Men, they stand on Terms, and will have their Inferiors to know their Duty, or suffer for it; How much more might the great God stand upon upon it? Yet, when Sinners will not come to him, he comes and offers Grace to them. 2. He offers Grace to every one who is willing to accept of it, *Iſa.* 55. 1. He, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money, and without price, *Rev.* 22. 17. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. None are excluded but such as exclude themselves: 3. The Lord offers his Grace fully, 1 Cor. 3. 22. All are yours, and ye are Christs; A whole Christ and all the Benefits of the Covenant are in your Offer, and ye must take Christ wholly, to teach you by his Word and Spirit, to deliver you from

from Sin, from the Wrath of God, and the Curse of the Law, to subdue your Lusts, and cheerfully surrender your selves to be his obedient Servants, or otherways he will not accept of you. 4. He offers Grace, and presses you with all Serioulness and Earnestness to accept of it, *Revel. 3. 20. Behold he stands at the door and knocks, if any man hear his voice and open the door, he will come in to him.* He who commands the Winds and the Sea, the Heaven and the Earth, he entreats Man, not to do him a Favour, but themselves; to admit him in to their Souls, whose Presence is the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, to entreat condemned Malefactors to accept of a Pardon, *2 Cor. 5. 20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* He also bewails your Unkindness to him, and Cruelty to your own Souls; He is broken with your whorish hearts, *Ezek. 6. 9. He is pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves,* *Amos 2. 12.* He lifts up his Voice and weeps over you, *Luke 19. 41, 42.* O how grieved is he that Sinners chuse rather to cast their Souls to Hell, than admit him into their Hearts? How oft does he repeat his Calls? He whose Seat is the Throne of Glory, at whose Name every knee shall bow down and worship, at whose Feet the triumphant Saints cast down their Crowns, he stands and calls you to hearken to his Voice, to accept of the Offers of his Grace.

The only Use I shall make of this Doctrine, is, To exhort you to accept of the Offers of Grace: I am sent to put it home to every Man and Womans Conscience within these Doors, Noble and Ignoble, Rich and Poor, High and Low, Old and Young: I must return Answer to him who sent me: Will ye accept of the Offers of Grace or not? Are ye willing to quite Sin, to give a Divorce to Idols, to dedicate your selves to Christ, to accept of him to be your Sovereign and Saviour? I must tell your Hazard if ye refuse this Offer, till ye open to Christ ye are shut up in black Darkness, *Coloss. 1. 13. Thy Case without Christ is next to Hell, if ye accept not Christ's Offer, your Guests are the Devils, your Heart is his Court: O! Shall damning Sin find easier Entertainment than a Saviour? Does the Devil love you? Was he crucified for you? Will he save you in the End? No, no, he is only seeking your eternal Ruine: Will ye then keep Satan and the Wrath of God in your Bosom, and live as Children of Disobedience, Heirs of Wrath, Ephes. 2. 2. John 3. 36. Will ye act like a Man whose House is on Fire, and will let no Body in nor out, till all be consumed in Flames? O Soul-murderers and Christ-murderers! What a Choise do you make? The Year of the Lords Vengeance shall overtake you. But if ye accept the Offer our blessed Lord makes, I can promise you in his Name, ye shall be kindly welcome, he will in no wise cast you out, *John 6. 37.* He will come in and take Possession of your Soul; and dispossess Satan and his Tribe, ye shall be royally Treated, you may go higher than a Mount Tabor, you may see the King in his Beauty, with the Crown on his Head, and thy Soul shall be Ravished with a View of the Land of Glory afar off; So that thy After-life shall be spent in Longings to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better.*

Doctrine 2: That under the Drop of the Gospel, People may have an External Profession, many outward Performances, and Attainments; and yet fail and come short of real Grace, deluding and cheating their own Souls.

For clearing this Point, we shall shew, First, What outward Performances and Attainments Professors of Religion may have, and yet fall of real Grace. Secondly, How appears, that notwithstanding of these Attainments, they do fail of real Grace. Thirdly, Whence it is, that many in the visible Church do thus deceive and cheat their own Souls.

I begin.

I begin with the *First*, To enquire what outward Performances and Attainments Professors of Religion may have, and yet fail of real Grace. *Answer* 1. They may go the Round of external Duties, as Prayer, Meditation, Hearing and Reading of the Word; Yea, may be as frequent in these as some real Saints, the proud *Pharisee*, Luke 18. 12. says, *I fast twice a week, I pay tithes of all I possess*, and the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. 58. 2, 3. tells of some hypocritical Professors, who *seek the Lord daily, and delight to know his ways, as a nation that did Righteousness*. 2. Such may be Inquisitive for Salvation in the Use of these Means of Grace, the Ruler who came to Christ, Luke 18. 18. asked, *Good Master, What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* and yet one thing he *lacked*, Luke 18. 22. Mark 10. 21. Christ discovered that this Man was not intirely willing to deny himself, and resign all to God's Disposal. 3. Such may have their Affections stirred and wrought upon by the Means of Grace, *Matth.* 13. 20, 21. Some may *hear the word, and anon with joy receive it, and yet have no root in themselves: For when tribulation and persecution ariseth, they are offended*. A wicked *Herod*, Mark 6. 20. feared *John Baptist*, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and observed him, and when he heard him, did many things, and heard him gladly. 4. Such may complain of Temptations, Desertions, and Spiritual Plagues, in the Dialect of the People of God. 5. They may be frequently in Converse with the People of God at Prayer and other Spiritual Duties, and may be esteemed as real Saints by them, as the foolish Virgins were not distinguished from the Wise till the *Bridegroom* came, *Matth.* 25. 6. They may have great Knowledge of the Truths and Mysteries of Religion, may be able to discourse of them like an Angel of Light, as *Balaam*, *Numb.* 24. 17 — 25. *There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab: out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion. Who among the antient Patriarchs or Prophets spoke so clearly of Christ, the bright Morning Star?* 7. To suffer for the Cause of Christ in a Day of Trial, *1 Cor.* 13. 3. 8. Some Appearance of the Graces of the Spirit, they may have a Temporary Faith, *Psal.* 106. 12. They may hate gross Sins, and the Sins of others. *Abraham* hated *Amnon's Sin*, *Simeon* and *Levi* the Sin of the Men of *Shechem*; They may have Appearances of Love to the People of God, as *Pharaoh* had a Kindness to *Joseph*, *Herod* to *John*, *Nebuchadnezzar* to *Daniel*; Yea, they may have Zeal like *John*, who cried, *Come and see my Zeal for the Lord of Hosts*. 9. False Professors may have something like a Fight within, resembling that betwixt Flesh and Spirit in Believers, as in *Balaam*, something putting him on to Sin, and some other thing thrusting him back from it. But,

Secondly, Notwithstanding of these Attainments, they fail of real Grace; For as to the first Sort, who go the Round of external Duties, yet they come short of real Believers, in being destitute of right Principles of Faith and Love, of the right Motive from the love of Christ constraining to Duty, and of right Ends, as to obey God, to entertain Communion with Christ, to be conform to his Image, to grow in Grace, and to subdue Idols; these noble Designs are not in their View. But they only perform Duties from Fashion, Custom, Education, or to support their Reputation, and please a natural Conscience. This is their Frame and Aim in doing Duties, they prepare not for them, they never miss the Presence of God in them; Absence and Presence was never their Exercise, and they are never bettered by their Duties, they are as cold, carnal, secure and insipid after them as before; They have nothing of that Stayedness and Spirituality after Duties, which Believers attain to.

As to the second Sort, who are Inquisitive after Salvation, crying out, *What shall I*

As a foolish animal fly; They may fall of real Grace, for they are not previously exercised about the Danger they are in of eternal Death; they are not off their old Bottom, but would be at *establishing their own Righteousness, What shall I do?* They would be at squeezing it out of their own Doings. The Ground of their Solicitude is to be free of Hell, no Word of enjoying God, of being made perfect in Holiness, and free of Sin. They never deliberated upon the Terms of taking on with Christ, but off-hand venture, therefore Christ is at Pains to tell them, *The birds of the air have nests, and the foxes have holes; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head:* go sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor: Upon this they go away grieved, forsaking Christ, and discover, they really fail of the Grace of God:

A third sort have their Affections stirred and moved in Duties by the Means of Grace, and yet come short of the Grace of God: For the Seed of the Word that is sown makes no deep Impression, it lies in the upper Scurf of the Ground, and so takes no Root downward, the Plough of God's Law has not drawn deep enough Furrows: There is no constant and lasting Impression, but a passing Flash of Affection, which is immediately gone: It only tickles the Sensual Appetite, it rises not from a Root of Spirituality in the Inner Man, natively raising the Soul to this Frame on Spiritual Grounds. And it has not these desirable Effects on them, that it has on Believers, as to *uplift to Spiritual Delight and Complacency in the Law of God, Psal. 119. 97.* to fill the Soul with insatiable intense Longings after Christ, *Psal. 119. 20.* and so as to hold him and not let him go, like the Spouse, *Song 3. 4.* and the two Disciples coming from Emmaus, *Luke 24. 28.*

Fourthly, Tho' some Professors of Religion come to complain of Temptations, Desertions, and Spiritual Plagues in the Dialect of God's People, yet they may fail of the Grace of God; for they only borrow their Case as their own, having heard a Sough of such Cases in the Society of Believers: But their *Sibyl* here betrays them, for as to Desertions, they cannot distinguish betwixt these and Manifestations. True it is, they are under a black Cloud of Christ's Absence, but unsensible it is so, for if any would say, O! you have nothing of the Presence of God with you, they would take it very ill, and be ready to flee in your Face. As to Temptations, they ly not much in their Road, the Devil thinks it not worth his pains to mount his great Ordinance against them, or throw his fiery Darts at them, he will lead them calmly to Hell with a Silver Cord of Formality and Hypocrisy, in a soft Sleep, in golden Dreams, that they are all in the right. As to Spiritual Plagues, I will not say but pure unsanctified Reason, on a reflex View, may discover some of these; but this will never discover the ill of them, what Prejudice the Soul sustains, and what Dishonour God receives by them: They are the Devil's black Guards, whereby he secures many Souls, till he send them down to the *Chamber of Death* to the Hypocrite, they are clothed with virtuous Names, and if any be so black, Satan cannot get a virtuous Name to set it off with; then Diminutives are brought in to lessen it, as being but some lighter and accidental Indisposition they allow not: But in a word, they are never really weighted, burthened, or exercised with them, complain as they will!

Fifthly, Tho' some Professors may be much in Converse and Prayer with the People of God, yet even here they may be found out; For, their Errand is not, *See ye him whom my soul loveth, if ye find him, tell him I am sick of love.* Lend me a Lift, no, it is not Edification, but Self-applause, Reputation and Credit they are seeking. A little time *treasuries and faggs* them after their Point is gained, having attained some Volubility of Expression,

Expression, by which they make others believe they have got great Freedom and Increase, and yet their Soul is bound up in Fetters, and their Fleece is dry all over; But if they be straitned in Words, to the Conviction of By-standers, O then how they fret, looking on themselves as affronted and baffled; Yea, they will quarrel God, *Why have we fasted, and thou hast not heard?*

Sixthly, Tho' some may have great Knowledge of the Mysteries of Religion, and can discourse of them like an *Angel of Light*; yet such may be void of the Grace of God, for their Knowledge consists in *Theory, Notion, and Speculation*, not in *Practice and Experience*; they cannot say, *I believed, and therefore have I spoken*: They are but like a Man who hath learned to point a *Geographick Map*, but let him in these Places himself, he should not know whither to move: His Knowledge wants Faith and Love, he has no Affection to Spiritual Truths, he has no House-room for them, he never laid them up in his Heart like *David*, that he might not sin against God; Yea, he *detains the Truth Prisoner in unrighteousness*, he opens not his Breast to let it have full Freedom to work Conviction and Conversion.

Seventhly, Some may come the Length to suffer for the Cause of Christ in a Day of Trial, and yet want real Grace; they may suffer with *Romantick Gallantry*, without *Spiritual Submission on Scripture Grounds*.

Eighthly, Some have Appearance of Grace, and yet want Grace; they may have a *Temporary Faith*, but want *Saving Faith*, to engage them to accept of Christ for *Righteousness and Strength*: They may have some gross Sins, but not every Sin as it is Sin, and loathsome to a holy God, they may hate Sin in others, but indulge it in themselves: They may have some Kindness to Saints, as *Pharaoh* to *Joseph*, but not because they are Saints, and bear Christ's Image, but because they are useful and beneficial to them: They may have some Zeal like *Jehu*, but it is not uniform for every good Work, it is influenced by Self, not by pure Love, to the Glory of God.

Ninthly, Some may have something like a Combate betwixt Grace and Corruption in their own Breasts, and yet fall of the Grace of God; for it is not genuine as that in Believers: In the Hypocrite it is only Natural Light, speaking against predominant Idols, but in the Believer, there is a stated Combate betwixt the Renewed and Unrenewed Part; In the Hypocrite there is only a Fight against grosser Sins which flee in the Face of Nature's Light, but the Believer fights against all Sin as Sin, and especially against his Spiritual and predominant Idols. The false Professor fights against Sin in his own Strength, by Vows and Resolutions, but the Believer wrestles against Sin in the Strength of Christ, and brings Arguments to oppose it, from the Sacred Treasury of the Scriptures. And Finally, In this meer glittering Professor, Conscience always gets the worse, and Sin prevails, but Believers in the End proves Victorious; *is more than Conquerors through Christ* strengthening them.

Thirdly, I am to shew whence it is that many in the Visible Church do thus deceive, and cheat their own Souls, do rest on a meer Appearance of Religion, and yet fall of the Grace of God: And, First, It flows from the Hypocrite himself, he never applies the Law close to his own Condition, he hath a natural Desire to be free of Hell and eternal Wrath, and therefore would gladly have the Name of a Christian to please a natural Conscience, and be a *Saves* to his Reputation, while in the mean time he cares not for the Heart Exercise of Religion, but is ready to judge by wrong Rules, 2 Cor. 10. 12. to mistake a common for a saving Work, and so patches up a Religion of his own, which will never be acceptable to a Holy and Heart-searching God. 2y, This may

may flow from Satan, who if he cannot defile the Church by unclean Ordinances, will yet defile it with unclean Members, he sows his *Tares among the Wheat*, Matth. 13. 25. he mingles base Hypocrites among true Christians, to corrupt and blur the Glory of the Church, that they may be *Spots in our Feasts of Charity*, by Reason of whom the Truth may be evil spoken of. 3^{ly}, Saints out of Charity are ready to overlook Faults in their Neighbours, and are apt to think others better than themselves, they are acquaint with the Evils of their own Heart, but can only discern the Spots in the Conversation of others. 4^{ly}, The Lord may have a sovereign Hand in this, for wise Ends, he can make Hypocrites serviceable to the Church by their great and eminent Gifts, and he will reserve this for his own peculiar Honour and Work at the great Day of Accounts, to separate the Tares from the Wheat, *Matth. 13. 40, 41. and shall burn the Tares with unquenchable Fire*: Tho' Hypocrites may dwell in the Church Militant, yet not one of them shall enter within the Church Triumphant, *Fearfulness shall surprize them, they shall dwell with devouring Fire and everlasting Burnings*, Isa. 33. 14.

Use, Is it so, That under the Drop of the Gospel many may have a great Profession and remarkable Attainments, and yet fail of real Grace: Then take heed ye be not such Hypocrites, such gilded Professors thus to ruine and cheat your own Souls. Consider, 1. Do ye believe the Truths of the Gospel or no? If ye do, then this one God is a God of Truth, he *saveth the Upright in Heart*, Psal. 7. 10. *He shall dwell in his Presence*, Psal. 140. 13. *But the Hypocrite in Heart heaps up Wrath*, Job 36. 13. *He shall dwell with everlasting Burnings*, Isa. 33. 14. If ye believe none of these things, why do ye feign a Profession, throw off the Mask and appear bare-faced. 2. If you fail of real Grace, all your Labour in Religion is lost, your bodily Exercise profits little, *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. 15. 8. Your Duties wherewith ye are proud and conceited shall be as Oil to quicken the Flames of God's vindictive Wrath against you. 3. You put a far greater Affront on the great God than the profane World do, you counterfeit a Religion of your own which God has never contrived in his Word, you rob God of his All-seeing and Heart-searching Nature, they say, *The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the Earth*, Ezek. 8. 12. What might be further added for Improvement of this, may be spoke to from the third Note from the Text, to which I proceed.

Doctrine 3. That it is the necessary Duty of all Persons under the Gospel to look diligently to themselves, and in their respective Stations to look to others, that they fail not of the real Grace of God, but be confirmed and established therein.

This Note hath two Branches, First, That it is the necessary Duty of all Christians to look diligently to themselves, that they fail not of the Grace of God, but be established therein. Secondly, That it is the Duty of Christians in their respective Stations to have an Eye on others, as well as on themselves, that they fail not of the Grace of God, that is in their Offer.

I begin with the first Branch, to make it more Plain and Useful, I shall shew, First, What we are diligently to look to in our selves. 2^{ly}, Press this Duty by some Reasons.

First, That we may not fail of the Grace of God, we are diligently to look to our State by serious Self-examination; see if you have obtained the Grace of God offered in the Gospel, list your selves as in the Presence of an Heart-searching Lord, compare your selves impartially with the Marks of Grace in his Word. If you ask, What are the

sure and unerring Marks of Grace? *Answer* 1. Look what is your Sorrow for Sin, are ye grieved for all Sins you are guilty of in Thoughts, Words and Actions, for the Sins of others, even of your nearest Friends as well as of your own? Are ye grieved for Sin because it dishonours God, and breaks his Law? Is your grief transitory, or has it a permanent Impression, obliging you to loathe, leave and forsake Sin? This is a good Sign, for these *who mourn shall be comforted*, Matth. 5. 4. 2ly, Know ye if the new Creature be formed in you? Have ye passed the Pangs of the new Birth of Conviction, Humiliation and Self-loathing? Can ye say, *Whereas once I was blind, now I see*, is your Understanding made to discern Sin exceeding loathsome, and Christ altogether lovely? Doth your Conscience challenge you impartially for Sin, is the Delight and Bend of your Thoughts and Desires upon spiritual Objects, do ye fear nothing so much as God's Displeasure, and covet nothing so earnestly as his Favour and Communion with him? If you be such new Creatures, you are in Christ, 2 Cor. 5. 17. 3ly, Try if ye have by Faith embraced Christ offered in the Gospel; have ye been persuaded by the Word of God to quite all Trust in your own Righteousness, in your own Duties and Attainments, and to depend alone on a crucified Christ for Righteousness and Salvation? Do ye also look to him for Strength to subdue Corruption, and perform Duty, and this Acting of Faith enclines you to Holiness in Heart and Life; if you thus believe on our blessed Saviour, you *shall not Perish, but have everlasting Life*, John 3. 16. 4ly, Do ye not only go the Round of all Duties with serious Diligence, but are denied to them all, and look not so much to the external Performance as if you meet with God's Presence in them? 5ly, Are ye much weighted with the Risings of a Body of Sin, and complaining of it, like the Apostle, *Rom. 7. 24*. Do ye not only desire Grace, but more Grace, and fresh Influences of the Spirit of Grace to quicken you in the Ways of Holiness? 6ly, Have ye such a Love to Christ as ye long for Communion with him, do esteem him lovely above all things, and esteem all his People who bear his Image, because they are Holy? Do ye love all his Precepts, even these which are most cross to Flesh and Blood, yea would ye rather suffer as break the least of them? If so, then Christ loves them who love him, *Prov. 8. 17*. Now if upon serious Search thou can read the Transcript of these Marks on thy own Soul, and be willing and desirous to be tried by the Lord with the Psalmist, *Psal. 139. 23*. then thou shalt not fail of Grace with the Bulk of this hypocritical Generation, but shall in the End attain Salvation. Therefore let me Exhort you who are utter Strangers to these Evidences of Grace, pray the Lord may work a gracious Change upon your Heart, and upstir your selves to come cheerfully and close with Jesus Christ in an everlasting Covenant, that he may be your *Righteousness and Strength*.

But if ye find these Tokens of Grace, then Believers, be not negligent, but look diligently to your Conversation through this evil World; more particularly, look, 1. To your Thoughts, these pave the Way to all Sin, how much Evil is contrived, acted and re-acted there; to prevent this, be sure thy Meditations be fixt on Heaven and Holiness, and not on fading Vanities. 2ly, Look diligently to your Words, keep the Door of your Lips, *Psal. 141. 3*. Beware of wicked and sinful Speeches, but take Delight to speak of the Excellency of Christ, commend him to others, that they may embrace and serve him. 3ly, Look to the Snares you may be environed with, when tempted by a wicked World, consider that the *World lies in wickedness*, that the Lord commands you, *follow not a multitude to do evil*, *Exod. 23. 2*. You have a more noble Example even of Christ and the Cloud of Witnesses to imitate, the World's good things cannot

cannot advance, nor its evil things hinder thy Happiness. When tempted by Satan, mind he is a *roaring Adversary*, the Lord has furnished you with sufficient Armour to resist him, *Eph. Chap. 6.* and Christ is the Captain General of your Salvation, *Heb. 2. 10.* on whom if ye depend, ye shall in the End prove Victorious. 4ly, Look to your Walk before the World in your Families, keep up the Worship of God, let your Conversation be a good Example to Children and Servants, instruct them in the Knowledge of Christ, and persuade them to Covenant with him: Walk *blameless before a perverse Generation*, let your Practice be agreeable to the known Principles of the Gospel, and let it be uniform, not proud in Prosperity, nor too much discouraged in Adversity. 5ly, Look to your selves in secret, that ye converse much with your own Heart, be plucking up the Root of Gall and Bitterness that grows there, be always imploying Jesus Christ, be frequent in the Duties of reading the Scripture, Meditation, Prayer and Self-examination, be minding and performing your Vows and Engagements, and look that the Frame of your Soul be not light, vain and frothy, but be serious and composed, delighting in God's Service; and in a Word, walk as minding the great Heart-searching God sees and notices you, to whom you are to give an Account of *all things done in the Body.*

Secondly, I shall press this Duty of looking to your selves by some Reasons, 1. Let the Authority of the great God enjoining it in this Text, and others, as *2 Cor. 13. 5.* *1 Cor. 11. 28.* *Deut. 4. 9.* *1 John 2. 8.* oblige you to it. 2ly, If you neglect to look to your selves, you ruine your own Souls, and provoke God to send you to *everlasting Burnings*; Yea Believers, if you neglect this Duty, ye shall fall into many sad Sins and Snares, be indisposed for Duty, and lose God's Favour. 3ly, Great shall your Advantages be if ye look diligently to your selves, ye shall grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Christ, your Conversation shall be beautiful like a Field the Lord hath blessed, you shall be blessed and preserved of the Lord in dangerous and difficult times, *Rev. 16. 15.* he will pass by many Faults ye are guilty of; ye shall glorifie and honour the Lord, and ye shall not lose these things we have wrought, but shall receive a full Reward, *1 John 2. 8.* Therefore be exhorted constantly, cheerfully and diligently to look that ye may not fail of the Grace of God, and to depend on Christ for his Counsel, Assistance and Blessing in this great Work.

The second Branch of this Doctrine is, *That it is the Duty of Christians in their Stations to look diligently to others, as well as to themselves, that they fail not of the Grace of God that is in their Offer, but be confirmed therein.*

To prepare this Note for our Use, I shall, *First*, Shew what others we are to look to; 2ly, Wherein our looking to others does express it self. 3ly, Give some Reasons to enforce this Dutie.

First; You are to look to such as are Fellow Members in the same Church or Congregation, such the Scripture calls *Brethren*, and this lays Obligation on us to look to them. 2ly, To more eminent Professors, a Stain on whom will do more extraordinary Hurt to Religion, wound the Honour of God, and Hearts of his People. 3ly, Look to these with whom you have more than ordinary Intimacy, the Occasions you have for this oblige you to Freedom with them, your Intimacy will make way for your Success, and if you improve not this Opportunity, you will be in great Hazard to be partakers of their Sins. 4ly, Look to your Blood Relations, this superadds a further Tie than common Charity; how can ye perform the Duties of these Relations, if ye be not concerned that they may not fail of the Grace of God? 5ly, Look to these of your own Household and

and Family, especially your Children, you are under the special Vows of God and Bonds of Nature to suppress Sin in them, or their Blood shall be on your Head; it is Soul, yea Self-murder to suffer Sin unsuppressed in them: Look also to your Servants, O what Carelessness among Masters and Mistresses to them, as if they were Brutes without Souls! Mind the Charge of them is committed to you of God, and for your Answer what will ye answer?

Secondly, Your looking to them that they may not fall of the Grace of God should express itself in these things. 1. In instructing them in the Knowledge of God, *Heb. 4. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.* *breed to thy self, and keep thy Soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine Eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy Heart all the days of thy Life; but teach them thy Sons, and thy Sons Sons.* This was Abraham's Commendation: *He will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.* Gen. 18. 10. 20. By inviting others to come and embrace Christ in the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, you may tell them how ye got your own Acquaintance made with Christ, that ye were once Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, but since God prevailed with you to accept the Saviour, you find a wonderful Sweetness and Easiness in Religion that you were utterly unacquaint with in the Days of your Vanity. You should encourage them, and answer Objections, and press them with alluring powerful Arguments, if at first ye gain not the Design, yet press them again and again to acquaint themselves with our blessed Saviour. Thus did Andrew to Simon, and Philip to Nathanael, John 1. 40. and thus did the Samaritan Woman commend Christ to the Men of her City, John 4. 29. and their Endeavours were successful and blessed of the Lord to gain the Souls of others. 3y, Give Counsel and Advice to others, when this is affectionately and prudently managed, it may be of great Influence. 4y, Add seasonable Reproofs, managed by sweet obliging and gaining Measures, Eph. 4. 15. 5y, By an holy circumspect Walk, which may be of Influence to shame others out of Sin. 6y, By wrestling with God in Prayer for others, and inviting them to Pray with you, Zech. 8. 21. *The Inhabitants of one City shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts; I will go also.* If it be not in your Power to reform them, you may pray God may reform them: if your Reproofs be displeasing to them, surely your secret wrestling at the Throne of Grace for their Souls shall be acceptable to God, and pleasing and profitable to your selves and others. 7y, If they still persevere in notorious Sins, give speedy Information to Magistrates, who bear not the Sword in vain, but to be a Terror to evil Doers; and if you be called, its your Duty to bear Witness against profane and lewd Persons before Magistrates or Church Judicatories, Lev. 24. 14.

Thirdly, I proposed to give some Reasons to press this Duty of looking unto others, that they may not fall of the Grace of God; and, 1. God's Command in the Text lays it at your Door, our Lord says to Peter, *When thou art Converted strengthen thy Brethren,* Luke 22. 32. You should lay out your Talent for the good of others, their Conversion glorifies God, and will bring the Blessing of him who is ready to perish upon you. 2y, These gross, loud, and open Sinners are of all things most vile and abominable, for they reflect the blackest Cloud on the glorious Perfections of the great God, Exalt. 36. 23. They defile our most holy Profession, Prov. 14. 34. *Sin is a Reproach to any People.* They make the reasonable Soul below the Brutes, they deface and ripen it for Wrath and Ruine, they are infectious to the Souls of others by their Example, and they bring on desolating Strokes upon the Land wherein they live, Psal. 107. 34. *A fruitful Land is turned into Barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* 3y, It is prophesied of Gospel Times that Saints shall

shall be concerned for gaining of the Souls of others, *Micah 4. 2. Isa. 2. 2. 3. 70. 40. 4. 5. Zeck. 8. 21. 22.* 43. This is the constant Practice of Saints in the New Testament, as of *Andrew and Philip, John 1. 41* — 47. Of the *Samaritan Woman, John 4. 26.* You deserve not the Name of Christians, if you *look not diligently lest others fall of the Grace of God.* 44. Where-ever true Grace is, it is communicative of it self; every real Christian is inclined to pity the Case of these who reject the Salvation offered in the Gospel, they know there is enough in Christ to supply and save every lost Sinner, and they desire many may taste of his Goodness as well as they do. They see the Love of Christ so wonderful to them, as they love him much like *Mary, Luke 7. 47.* and they know not how to express their Love, but by commending him to others, and persuading them to accept of him as their Lord and Saviour.

Use First, How lamentable is it, that in these Days wherein we live, there are so few concerned, if others fall of the Grace of God; so few Christians Zealous to reclaim their Friends and Neighbours from Sin, and to persuade them to accept of the Saviour. This 1. Is a Token of an evil Frame of Spirit, that you are unconcerned and stupid to say like *Cain, Am I my brother's keeper?* That you are secure, and want the Exercise of the Life of Grace, for where that is, there will be sincere Desires to bring Christ into your *neighbour's house, Song 3. 4.* and that you slight the great Duty of the second Table of the Law, *To love your Brethren.* 2. The Neglect of this Duty is eminently hurtful to your own Souls, it obstructs the Communications of God's Favour to them; For it is, *The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall be watered himself, Prov. 11. 25.* The People of God can attest to their Experience, that they have never fared better themselves, than when most concerned for the good of others. Yea, if thou neglect this, thou may be guilty of the Ruine of others, *Prov. 24. 11. 12.* the Lord may lay their Sin at thy door.

Use second, Of Exhortation. Be persuaded to look more diligently lest others fall of the Grace of God, be concerned to reclaim them from Sin, and bring them to Christ. Motive 1. This is one End why God has given thee Grace. That thou may be a Mean to do good to others: God has set thee in a Corner of a graceless Country or Congregation, to inflame thy Neighbours with Love to Christ, as Men will put some burning Cinders into a Heap of Coals to set all in a Flame. 2. How great Honour shall be bestowed on thee, if thou be an Instrument to do good to others, *James 5. 20.* He which converts a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins. The *Samaritan Woman* was but in a private Station, and yet God honoured her to convert the Men of her City. 3. Tho' many should not be gained by thy Endeavours, yet this is a seasonable Duty in an evil Day, a Token of a Reviving Time, and thy weak Endeavours shall be plentifully rewarded of the Lord, *Mal. 3. 16. 17.* Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him — And they shall be mine saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Doctrine 4. That Profaneness and Error is a bitter Root, which springing up, may trouble the Church, and defile many Professors; and therefore should be carefully prevented, and nipped in the Bud.

Having spoke of the Evil of Sin on Verse fourth, and will have occasion to speak of the Evil of Profaneness on the following Verse; I shall, for further opening of this

Note,

Note, and the Remainder of my present Text, only speak of the bitter Root of Error, which seems to be principally intended in the Text.

And First, I shall shew, That Error is a bitter Root. Secondly, Whence it is that this Root springs up to the defiling of many Souls. Thirdly, How it appears, That this Root of Error defiles the Souls of many Professors, and troubles the Church. Fourthly, What should be done to prevent the springing up of this bitter Root.

That Error is a Root of Bitterness, appears, if we consider, First, The sad Consequences of Erroneous Doctrine believed and maintained, it destroys the Soul, 2 Pet. 2. 1. Overthrows the Faith of many, 2 Tim. 2. 18. Perverts the Scripture to Men's destruction, 2 Pet. 3. 16. Deceives many, Mark. 24. 5. And therefore is called; Damnable and Pernicious. 2ly, The Testifies the Holy Ghost in the Word of God gives to such as promote this corrupt Doctrine, are Titles bearing great Indignation and Abomination; They are called, Dogs, Evil Workers, Phil. 3. 2. Grievous Wolves, Acts 7. 15. Deceitful Workers, Ministers of Satan, as if Commissioned by him, 2 Cor. 11. 13. Deceivers, Liars, Ill Men, and Seducers, Revel. Chapter second, that was worse and worse, 2 Tim. 3. 13. 3ly, Consider the many Threatnings and Voices in Scripture against them, Mark. 22. The many Warnings that are given to Ministers to watch against them, Acts 20. The plain Directions that are to Censure them, Titus 3. 10. Christ commends the Churches who Censure Erroneous Persons, and reproves them who do it not, as is evident from the second and third Chapters of the Revelation. 4ly, The Lord gives many Warnings to such Teachers of Error, Rom. 16. 17. Acts 20. Phil. 3. 15. 2 John 10. 5ly, Error is a very bitter Root, for it is contrair to God's Truth and Veracity, it fathers a Lie upon the Lord, Saying, Thus saith the Lord, when he says the contrary; It teaches others to Lie, it hath its Original from the devil the father of lies, John 8. 44. and it is a Fruit of the Flesh, as well as Murder, Adultery and Witchcraft, Gal. 5. 19, 20. Can it then be but a Root of Bitterness? 6ly, The Off-spring of this Root does prove it to be Bitter, it spoils the Vines, Song 2. 15. It defiles the Purity of the Church, it defaceth its comely Government, and brings in Confusion and Disorder, it spoils the Unity, bringing in Contention, biting and devouring one another, Gal. 5. 15. It destroys Souls, and infects more speedily and dangerously than any Vice; never has the Church been so ruined by any scandalous Practice, as by venting of corrupt Doctrine, and nothing opens the Mouths of the Wicked more to revile Religion, than this, 2 Pet. 2. 2. 7ly, The Truths of God are so nearly linked together, that one Error corrupts many of them, and makes a speedy Inlet to Apostacy and Defection from the whole. And therefore, from what is said, it is evident the Apostle had good Reason to warn the believing Hebrews, That they Look diligently lest they be defiled by the springing up of this root of bitterness.

In the second Place, I shall shew whence this Root of Bitterness does so spring up to the defiling of many Souls. And First, The Sins of a professing People do water and nourish this Root, and make it grow; As 1. When a professing People abuse Spiritual Mercies, slight Convictions, and smother Challenges, then the Lord gives them up to a Spirit of Delusion to believe lies, 2 Thess. 2. 9, 10, 11. 2. When spiritual Sins, as Pride, Security, Hypocrisy, and Formality, keeping up the Form without the Power of Godliness, the Truth but not the Love thereof does prevail. 3. An itching Humor, loathing the Simplicity of Gospel Truth, Athenian-like desiring new things. 4. When People care for no Truths, but what come dressed in such a peculiar manner,

intense to their Antinomian Fancy, they are so Proud and Self-conceited, They will not endure sound Doctrine, but after their own lusts bear as themselves Teachers, 2 Tim. 4. 3. 4. Little Respect to Faithful Ministers who preach Truth, may procure this Plague, to get Pastors according to their own Heart, as the Lord threatens, Ezek. 20. and John 9. 43: I have said in my Masters Name, and ye have not received me; if another shall come in his own Name, him will ye receive. 6. Lightness and Unstability of Professors make this bitter root spring up, when they go beyond their Reach to seek or meet a Temptation, by reading corrupt Books, hearing corrupt Teachers, or conversing with corrupt Men, which the Lord commands us to shun, you have no Call to these things, and People of weak Understandings cannot take these Fires into their Bosom and not be burnt. 7. A Jangling, Questioning Strain introduces Error, when Folks begin to cast at lesser Truths, quickly Delusion comes to a greater Height, when Men become untruster in the smallest Truths (if any may be called so) it is just with God to deprive them of all.

Secondly, Satan does plant and water this bitter root of error, he makes it spring up and defile many Souls, he employs some to Traffique, as compass the Sea and Land, to go to and fro to promote his wicked Designs; Such were the false Apostles, 2 Cor. 11. 13. Rev. 2. 2. He sets himself by all Means to make the Ministers of the Gospel contemptible, either by crying down the Ministry altogether, as Corah, Dathan and Abiram, Num. 16. did; or by casting Reproaches upon the Persons, Gifts and Conversations of Ministers, calling them Covetous, Self-seekers, Earthly-minded, Proud, Ambitious, and inconstant Men, as Quakers and others do. Satan useth many other Means for carrying on his Designs, he chooses Instruments who have a fair Shew of Religion, Who by good words & fair speeches deceive the simple, Rom. 16. 18. He engages some who have Power in the Church on his side, and also in the State, if he can, as the false Prophets did of old, Jer. 26. Amos 7. 10. He pleases itching Ears with new Doctrines, he covers these with a Pretence of Christian Liberty, Reason and Revelation; and thus catches some deluded Souls, and leads them to Ruine.

Thirdly, The Lord may have a holy Over-ruling Hand in allowing this bitter Root of Error thus to spread, 1 Cor. 11. 19. There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest. Tho' the Lord can have no Access to this Delusion as sinful, yet he may permit the Devil to attack with his Temptations, to punish a Generation of ungrate Hypocrites, who receive not the Truth in Love, 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11. He may furnish Men with Gifts, of which they may make sinful Use to promote Error, he may also deprive them whom he designs to plague with this Delusion of these Means, which may be useful to discern and resist the same, he may deprive them of Teachers, and of Light and Conviction, Gen. 6. 3. 1 Tim. 4. 2. And in a word, the Lord who is Wonderful in Counsel, whose Ways and Judgments are past finding out, may have many other inconceivable, holy and just Ways, in carrying on this Judgment.

In the third Place, That this bitter Root of Error may trouble the Church, and defile the Souls of many Professors, is evident from the sad Experience and History of all Ages, we may find some Error spreading in the Church of Corinth in the Days of the Apostles, and in the Churches of Pergamus and Thyatira, Revel. Chapter second. How much did the Arian Heresy defile the whole Church in the times of the first Christian Emperors? So as a great part of the World became Arian, and it was said, One Athanasius against the whole World. How much did the ancient Heresies of Macedonius, Euryches, Nestorius, Pelagius and others, rent the Church? How many Heats, Divisions and terrible Persecutions,

cutions did these occasion? We may read in the Writers of antient Church-histories and Heresies, How did *Antichristianism* and *Popish Errors* prevail over the visible Church for some hundred Years, as Prophetically foretold, *2 Thess.* Chapter second, *Revel.* 8. 9, 13, 17. And since the Reformation from *Papery*, How much have the Errors of *Socinians*, *Arminians*, *Anabaptists*, *Quakers*, and the other Branches of this *Root of Bitterness*, defiled the Christian Church? any who are acquaint with Books may know. I need not here dip into that *Question*, If the People of God may be defiled by this *bitter Root of Error*? To be short, it is sure Believers cannot be wholly separate from Christ, yet since they have In-dwelling Corruption, and may fall into gross Sins, they are not excused from falling into Error: Yet it is very rare for a Believer to fall into gross *Fundamental Errors*, or continue any time therein, so as to be accounted a Heretick, such are Self-condemned, *Titus* 3. 11. and rarely Recovered by Repentance, *2 Tim.* 2. 25. But if they fall into such Errors, the Lord usually chastens with some sore Rods, or takes a sharp Way to restore them, or removes them under a Cloud, as he did with *Solomon* for his *Idolatry*.

Lastly, I shall shew how this *bitter Root of Error* should be prevented, suppressed and nipt in the Bud, that the Church may not be troubled, and Souls defiled. Now, there be three sorts of Persons concerned in this Duty, *Magistrates*, *Ministers* and *People*. I shall begin with the Duty of *Ministers*, when Error is spreading, it is our Duty, *First*, To look to God as the great Over-ruler of such sad things sent on the Church, to see if he be not contending for some Fault in our Life or Ministry, if we have been Faithful and Diligent in opening the Doctrine of the Gospel, as well as in speaking to the Duties and Cases of *Christians*. We should also mourn over the Case of these who are infected, and pray for their Recovery, we must be at Pains by Reading, Meditation and Conference, to know the Truths of God exactly, that we may the better teach them to the People: And after-all, must pray for God's Direction and Blessing, in order to Reclaim his People from the Error of their Way, and to Edifice them in the Ways of the Lord. 2. Ministers of the Gospel should endeavour Union among themselves, and the People of their Flocks; for oft-times Division and Delusion come together. 3ly, At such a time it is seasonable to open and confirm these Truths that are opposed by Adversaries, yet so as People may not be diverted from the great Duties of practical Godliness. People would also be pressed to shun the Company of Seducers, *Rom.* 16. 17. And sometimes it may be useful to put something in Print for convincing Seducers, and guarding *Christians* from their Error. 4ly, It is also requisite to try and discover Seducers, who they are, what is the Danger of their Error, and what new Names and Pretends by which they cover old condemned Heresies; thus *John* discovers the Abomination of the *Nicolaitans Doctrine*, *Revel.* 2. 14, 15, and thus *Peter* second Epistle second Chapter, and *Jude*, who compares corrupt Teachers to *Balaam*, *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*. 5ly, Tho' publick Debate be not always seasonable, as when such Errors have been sufficiently confuted, when Persons seek only to put things to Confusion, and become Unreasonable, Absurd and Blasphemous in their Debates: Yet sometimes publick Debate may be useful, that the *Mouths of vain Talkers may be stopped*, *Titus* 1. 9, 10, 11. And we may find our blessed Lord, *Stephen*, and the Apostle *Paul*, frequently disputing in *Assemblies* and *Synagogues*: Every Person, yea, every Minister or Divine is not fit to manage such publick Debates; but only such as are of sufficient Abilities, Wisdom and Parts. It is not to be expected that Adversaries will be quite put to Silence, but they may be esteemed Convinced, when the Truth is made clear to sober, serious

serious Men, and the Adversary can speak nothing to purpose against it. 6^{ly}, Sometimes *Admonition* may be necessary, *Titus* 3. 10. This may be done, either *Privately*, or more *Publickly*, by a *Church Judicatory*, and may be intimate before the Congregation, rebuking the Seducers for their Sin, and warning them of Gods Anger if they continue Impenitent; this being a Censure of God's Appointment, may by his Blessing affect the Conscience and reclaim the Offender. 7^{ly}, An obstinate Heretick is to be Rejected and cast out of the Church by *Excommunication*, *Titus* 3. 10. *1 Tim.* 1. 20. This ought not to be done, but on weighty Grounds, and for good Ends, that God may be Glorified, and the Offender's Soul saved in the day of the Lord: Yea, after the Sentence is passed, Ministers are to Pray for the Blessing, and wait to see the desired Effect. When these Duties are carefully performed by Ministers of the Gospel, the Lord commends them, as he does the Church of *Ephesus*, *Revel.* 2. 2, 3. But when they are omitted, and corrupt Teachers suffered, it is sharply reproved, as in the Epistles to *Pergamus* and *Thyatira*, *Revel.* 2. 14, 15, 20 — 24.

Next, Magistrates are to look diligently to prevent the springing up of this bitter Root of Error, which is an Inlet to *Apostacy* and all Wickedness. It is not sufficient for a Christian Magistrate (who is a *nursing Father* to the Church, *Isa.* 49. 23.) only to maintain civil Peace, and restrain Disturbances when Error reigns, this is no more than a Heathen Magistrate would do: But further, 1. A Christian Magistrate may fear and plead with God that a Stroke of *Apostacy* and Error may not be inflicted upon a Church and People committed to his Care, he may fear lest his Sins provoke God to let loose such a Spirit; *Jeroboam* made *Israel* to sin, and *Solomon* was guilty of Idolatry by conniving at it. 2. He should Countenance and Encourage faithful Ministers of the Gospel who are zealous to curb Sin and prevent Error; thus did *Hezekiah*, *2 Chron.* 30. 22. 3^{ly}, He may endeavour according to his Place and Station, to compose and allay all Differences and Heart-burnings that may arise amongst these who are in the main, one for the Truth: It is one of the sad Concomitants of a vehement Spirit of Error, that with it come Heart-burnings, Divisions and Offences among the Church and Officers thereof; it is marked of *Constantine* at the Council of *Nice*, that among other Means which he used to suppress the *Arian Heretic*, he did most carefully endeavour to remove Differences among the *Orthodox Bishops* and *Confessors* of the Church, that they might be more unite to oppose the common Enemy. 4^{ly}, He should join his Authority to such Statutes as Church Judicatories may enact for curbing Errors, he should preserve the Ordinances of the Gospel, and Dispensers of the same from being interrupted and reproached. 5^{ly}, He may interpose his Authority to stand to Truths formerly received, and remove and discourage false Worship, as *Josiah* did, *2 Chron.* 39. 31, 32, 33. 6^{ly}, The Christian Magistrate it is his Duty to discountenance Seducers, to inhibit them to vent their Errors, which cannot be called a forcing of their Conscience, but a restraining of them from hurting the Conscience of others; he may also inhibit others to hear or converse with known Seducers, even as Men may be commanded to keep at Distance from a Place or Persons infected with the Plague, he may destroy Heretical Books spread for infecting others, inhibit the printing, selling or transporting them: He may restrain *Trafficking Priests* and idle Vagabonds employed to debauch Mens Consciences; he may Censure blasphemous and irreverent Expressions against God, his Ordinances, his Ministers, and Professors of the Truth; he may oblige Seducers to wait on *Ecclesiastick Assemblies* and Conferences for their Trial and Conviction,

Conviction, and may punish Contraveeners, and make them incapable of Places of Trust, since they would imploy it for the prejudice of the Common-wealth.

Finally, It is also the Duty of People to look diligently in their Station to prevent the spreading of this bitter Root of Error, and that they be not infected thereby. For this End, 1. Be affected upon the Appearance of such an Evil as upon the News of Sword, Famine or Pestilence, for then the Trumpet sounds, *Wo, wo, wo to the Inhabitants of the Earth because of the Angels that are so found,* Rev. 8. 13. You would be seriously affected with the Hazard of others falling away, and deprecate this as the worst of Strokes. 2. See that you be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, this will put you under the Protection of that great Promise, *John 16. 13. When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth;* and in Prospect of a Storm renew Covenant with God, that ye may be faithful to the Death. 3. Endeavour to be solidly confirmed in the Knowledge of necessary Truths, especially these that may be most opposed by Adversaries, keep a good Esteem of your Ministers, *Heb. 13. 17.* Wait on the Ordinances of the Gospel which are for your Confirmation and Strengthening, *Eph. 4. 12, 13.* and follow the Footsteps of the eminently Godly, *Song 1. 9.* 4. Be serious in the Exercise of Christian Fellowship, *provoking one another to Love and good Works,* Heb. 10. 24. Chap. 3. 12, 13. Mal. 3. 16, 17. 5. Beware of frequent and familiar Converse with Teachers of Error, beware of reading their Books, hearing their Sermons, or frequenting their Company; but rather shew your Indignation at them, *Prov. 19. 27. Cease, my Son, to hear the Instruction that causeth to err from the Words of Knowledge.* 6. Pray much to God that he may sanctifie you by his Truth, *John 17. 17.* that he may teach you to have your Affections mortified to external Enjoyments, and make you submissive to the Cross, willing to lose all, and embrace Christ.

HEBREWS XII. Verse 16.

Let there be any Fornicator, or profane Person, as Esau; who for one Messel of Meat sold his Birth-right.

THE Apostle in this Verse proceeds to other Instances of Evils by which Christian Societies would be corrupted, and Way made for total Apostacy; That these may be prevented, or these who are guilty of them recovered, or be cast out of the Church that she be not defiled, which are the Ends of this Inspection.

In the Text he sets together *Fornication and Profaneness*, 1. Because they are the Heads of the two Sorts of Sins Men are usually guilty of, namely *Sins of the Flesh and of the Mind*, Eph. 2. 3. 2. Because they usually go together, *Fornicators* habitually do always grow profane. 3. Because of all Sins, these are most rarely repented of. *Esau* here is an Instance of *Profaneness*, the Scripture mentions nothing of his *Fornication*; his taking of Wives from the *Hittites* who were Proud, Evil and Idolatrous, was a grief of Mind to his religious

religious Parents, *Gen. 26. 34. 35.* but the Evil of *Polygamy* was not known in these Days.

In the whole Text consider, 1. The Evils to be watched against, which we must look diligently to prevent, as has been declared from Verse 19. 2. An effectual Motive to abstain from them taken from one guilty thereof. In which Example we have, 1. The Person instanced, *Eſau*. 2. The Evil he is charged with, *Prophaneneſs*. 3. The way whereby his *Prophaneneſs* manifested it ſelf, *he ſold his Birth-right for one Morſel of Meat*: And in the following Verſe we have the ſad Iſſue of this Sin, and his vain Attempt to recover what he had loſt.

The firſt Evil to be guarded againſt is *Fornication*, the Apoſtle placeth this in the Front as the Door of *final Apoſtacy*, which does intimate a great Difficulty, if not a moral Impoſſibility to recover theſe who are guilty thereof. It is a Sin moſt oppoſite to Holineſs, to the Study whereof the Apoſtle exhorted the believing *Hebrews*, Verſe 14. It is a Sin when continued in, does exclude from the *Kingdom of Heaven*, *1 Cor. 6. 9.* and it is a Sin which when Men are habitually given up to, they are never, or very rarely recovered from it. By *Fornication* in this Text all Sins of the ſame Kind are intended, for the Scripture calls Conjunction with Women not in lawful Marriage, by the Name of *Fornication*, *1 Cor. 5. 9. 10.*

The ſecond Evil to be avoided is *Prophaneneſs*, or ſee that there be no profane Perſon among you. To be profane may be taken either *Paſſively*, and ſo it ſignifies a Perſon or Place ſeparate and caſt out from Society of ſacred Things; ſo holy Things are ſaid to be profaned when Men take off the Veneration that is due to them, and expoſe them to common Uſe; Or *Actively*, profane is one that deſpiſes, ſets light by, and contemns ſacred Things, ſuch as mock at Religion, God's Promiſes and Threats, and neglect his Worſhip, too many there be of ſuch profane at this Day.

This *Prophaneneſs* is the laſt Step into *final Apoſtacy*, when Men from Profeſſors of Religion become Deſpiſers and Mockers of it, their State is dangerous, if not irrecoverable. An Inſtance of this Evil is given us in *Eſau*, who was entitled to many Church Privileges, he was the *firſt Born* of *Iſaac*, circumciſed according to the Law, and Partaker of all the Worſhip of God in that holy Family, and yet an *Outcaſt* from the Covenant of Grace: Let this make us all tremble and fear.

Thirdly, In the Text we have the Way whereby *Eſau's Prophaneneſs* manifested it ſelf, *For one Morſel of Meat he ſold his Birth-right*: For better underſtanding of this Part of the Text, we may further explain, 1. What this *Birth-right* was. 2. How he ſold it. 3. That this diſcovers him to have been profane.

As to the *Firſt*, His *Birth-right* in the Original is, *רִשְׁוֹנָה*, the Right of the *Firſt-born*, the things belonging to him as his Father's *Firſt-born Son*. It is clear from Scripture there were many Rights of *Primogeniture* in the Church, ſome of them ariſing from the Light of Nature, and ſo common to all Mankind, and ſome of them of *Divine Inſtitution* among the People of the *Jews*, as, 1. The double Portion of the paternal Inheritance was ſecured to the firſt Born by the Law, *Deut. 21. 17.* 2. A natural Reaſon is given for it, *He is the beginning of his Strength, the Right of the firſt Born is his*: this Right was certainly ſold by *Eſau* ſo far as his Powers reached. 3. A Right of Rule and Government over the reſt of the Children of the Family, which was transferred to *Judah* on the Forfeiture made by *Reuben*, *1 Chron. 5. 2.* and therefore when *Iſaac* gave the *Birth-right* to *Jacob*, he told *Eſau*, *I have made him thy Lord, and all his Brethren have I given to him for Servants*, *Gen. 27. 27.* 3. Theſe things all conſtantly belong to the firſt Born, and

and then was like a Bull that from some source in the *Parish* had been sucking
an Incense of all Church *Princes*, and the *Princes* of the *Princes* *Princes*. It was
distinct from the *Princes* and was distinguished by *Esau*, who cried out, *He*
long my Blessing, Gen. 27. 36. But tho' the *Blessing* were not annexed to the *Birth-right*,
yet there was an Imagination, that it might be conveyed according to *Primogeniture*;
and therefore, *Esau* having purchased the *Birth-right*, might expect the *Blessing*. Yet,
in this whole *System* of *Esau* stated not at *Personal Riches and Power*, wherein he was
content to be his Brother's *Slave*, as he did; But at an *Inheritance* of the
Paternal Blessing; wherein the *primogeniture* and the Church and State were con-

Secondly, it came to enquire how Esau sold the birth-right? How he could sell that which was not in his own power? Esau. The word is under, he gave away, he did not choose to make an earnest bargain, and sold it as is expressed, Gen. 25: 33. He could not change the Course of Nature, he was still his Father's First-born, but he parting with the Privileges that belonged to him as such, and so virtually with the Blessing.

Thirdly, That in this Action *He* carried Profanely, is evident; Because 1. He did covered an *Edifice* and Readiness to part with his *Birth-right*, and all that was his chief Interest in it, and by Faith ascertained the Promise that went along with it, he would not have so easily surrendered into a Renouncing of it, but being given to Pleasures and Love of the present World, he despised it. 2. In that he valued it at so small a Rate, as one *Meal of Porridge or Barley of man*; he sold it for a despicable Equivalent: Without further Deliberation he confirmed the Sale with a *solemn Oath*, whereby he shews the highest Contempt of what he had parted with. 3. He was so Regardless of what he had done, that he did *eat and Drink*, and rose up and went his way: *Thus he despised his Birth-right*. Gen. 35.

Observe *in this the Day of Christ's 1st Advent* and *from the Sin of Uncleanness, as an Index*

Observe 2. The even in Gospel assemblies and Societies, there be a great many who are Profane and Atheistical in their Hearts and Lives.

Observing: Such profane souls place the chief of their Happiness in **TEMPORAL** things, a **Wish** of Bread, Pleasures, Honours, and Riches.

Observe, ¹ That more private Men, than Job & Daniel, ² suffer, ³ Trifles, they will readily re-
mune the best Things of their Souls, ⁴ the more Interest of both Church and State, in Exchange for
them. For so much is imported in this ⁵ *Be it right*, and all is let go for a ⁶ *Morsel of Bread*,
a little petty sensual Pleasure.

I return to Observe 1. This is the Day of all Christians to abhor and shun the Sin of
Uncleaness as an Inlet to find Apostasy.

To prepare this for our Use, I shall *First*, Shew what is understood by the Sm of *Revelation* or *Unleavened* in the Feat. *Secondly*, Why the *Revelation* is called *Unleavened*.

As to the 2nd, Under the Term Furniture in the Stat. may be furnished with a

calls *Whoredoms*. Rev. 18. 2. as these who prostitute themselves to the Abomination of the filthy Fellowship with Devils as they imagine. These who continue in *Stilly*, a Sin most unreasonable in reasonable Creatures, it is called *Concupiscence*, Lev. 18. 20. And these who *deale themselves with Mankind*, 1 Tim. 1. 10. Rom. 1. 26, 27. these are Sins against Nature. 26. Here is comprehended the Evil of *Incest*, which is unnatural, being betwixt Persons within Degrees of Consanguinity and Affinity fixed by the Law of God, Lev. Chap. 18. for this Sin the Canaanites were cast out, and it was abominable even to the Heathen, 1 Cor. 5. 11. 27. It takes in that Kind of *Uncleaness* that is committed contrary to the Tie and Band of Marriage, called the Covenant of God, Prov. 2. 17. And this is to be considered, either where both Persons are married, as *David* and *Bathsheba*, which we call *double Adultery*; or when the Man is married and the Woman free; or where the Woman is married and the Man is free, which is most gross, as corrupting his Neighbours Seed, and Offspring, and alienating the Inheritance. To this Kind of *Uncleaness* belongs also *Bigamy*, the marrying of two Wives at once, and *Polygamy*, the marrying of more than two at the same time. 28. A *Fornicator* in the Text comprehends that *Uncleaness* that is betwixt free and unmarried Persons, which usually goes under that Name; this if forced, it is Death by the Law, Deut. 22. 24; and it is called a *Rape*; If it be continued in, it is *Whoredom*. This Sin of *Uncleaness* is either *Mental*, Matth. 5. 28. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart; Or it is *Corporal Uncleaness*, when Sin is conceived and brought forth into Act. To reclaim Men from this, God has set his Hedge in the Seventh Command, and they who break this Hedge, a Serpent shall bite them. Job 21. 11. calls this Sin a *hainous Crime*, every failing is not a Crime, every Crime is not *hainous*, but this is an *hainous Crime*. I might go through each of the Branches of it already named, and shew they are abhorred; but I shall touch them only in General. So I proceed.

Secondly, To give some Reasons why we should beware of all *Uncleaness*; and 1. The Spirit of God forbids the very first risings of it, Prov. 6. 25, 26, 27. *Be not after her Beauty in thine Heart, neither let her take thee with her Eye-lids. Can a Man take fire in his bosom, and his Clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot Coals, and his Feet not be burnt?* 28. Fearful are the Punishments God inflicts on the Committers of this Sin, Prov. 22. 14. *The strange Woman is a deep Pit, he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.* Prov. 5. 3, 4, 5. *The Lips of a strange Woman drop as the Honey-comb, and her Mouth is smoother than Oil: But her End is bitter as Wormwood, sharp as a two-edged Sword; her Feet go down to Death, her Steps take hold of Hell.* By a *strange Woman* in the Book of the Proverbs is meant another Man's Wife, a *whorish Woman*. How severely God did punish this Sin on the Sons of Eli, we may read, 1 Samuel, Chap. 2. and Chap. 4. 10, 11. and upon David and his House, 2 Sam: 11. 15. 32. This Sin disturbs the Senses, and robs the Man of very Reason, Hos. 4. 11. *Whoredoms take away the Heart.* 33. It is an open Profanation of the Temple of God, where ye profess to lodge his Spirit and Graces, 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. *Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any Man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy. It is a prostituting that Body which is redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 1. 18. 1 Cor. 6. 20. 34. This Sin gives a mortal Wound to Conscience, and also ruins thy Name and Reputation, Prov. 6. 32, 33. *Whoso committeth Adultery with a Woman, lacketh understanding; he that doth so destroyeth his own own Soul: A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away; this passes the Power of Physicians to heal.* 35. This Sin Mortifies the*

and in a Word, ruins both Soul and Body; thus Solomon tells, *Prov. 7. 23.* that the young Man sold of Understanding follows the strange Woman, till a Dart strikes through his Liver, as a Bird hastes to the Snare, and knows not that it is for his Life. And Chap. 9. 18. The dead are there, and all Guests are in the depths of Hell.

Use 1. This Doctrine gives Check to Persons of this Abomination, especially to the Church of Rome who allow of it, they suffer not their Priests to marry, but they may have their Concubines; from this it is justly said of that City, or Church of Rome, *Ubi est semper una Concubina*, it is now become a common Stew; And no wonder, when the Pope for a Sum of Money will give a Patent to commit Uncleaness. If God condemn Fornication, how dare Men allow it?

Use 2. Of Exhortation, To keep from this abominable Sin of Uncleaness. Let every Man have his own Wife, says the Apostle, not his Concubine, not his Concubine. Now, that I may further deter you from this adulterous Wickedness, consider the Evil of it in these few. 1. It debases a Person, and makes him resemble the Beasts, hence it is described to be like *Horserneighing*, *Jer. 5. 8.* 2. It stains, pollutes and defiles the Soul more than other Sins, the Devil is called an *unclean Spirit*, *Luke 11. 24.* the Justified Person in the Devil's first Born, all over ulcerate by Sin, his Eyes sparkle with Lust, his Mouth foams out Filth, his Heart burns like Mount *Sena* with unclean Desires. Whereas the Believers Body is a living Temple, and his Soul a little Heaven, adorned with all the Graces of the Spirit. 3. It is destructive to the Body, *Prov. 5. 11.* And when mourn at last, when thy Flesh and thy Body are consumed. It turns the Body into an Hospital, wastes the radical Moisture, rots the Skull, eats away the Beauty of the Face; as Flame wastes the Candle, so the Fire of Lust consumes the Bones, and hastens Death. 4. It ruins the Estate, *Prov. 6. 26.* By means of a whorish Woman a Man is brought to a piece of Bread. Whores are the Devil's Horse-leeches, they never have enough, they soon sponge your Purse. The Prodigal's Portion was suddenly spent when he fell among Harlots, *Luke 15. 13.* he that lives in Luxury shall die in Beggery. 5. It damns the Soul, *1 Cor. 6. 9.* Neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind shall inherit the Kingdom of God. *2 Pet. 2. 9. 10.* The Lord knows how to reserve the unjust to the Day of Judgment to be punished, but chiefly them that walk after the Flesh, in the Lust of Uncleaness. *Prov. 9. 18.* The Dead are there, and her Guests are in depths of Hell. *Prov. 7. 26.* She hath cast down many wounded, yea many strong Men have been slain by her. 6. Such as are guilty hereof are Objects of God's Abhorrence. *Prov. 22. 14.* The Mouth of the strange Woman is a deep Pit, he who is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein. Abhorrence is the highest Degree of Hatred.

Use 3. For Direction, How to shun this abominable Sin, that ye be not infected thereby. 1. Come not into the Company of an whorish Woman, *Prov. 5. 8.* Come not nigh the Door of her House. Keep from all Occasions of this Evil. 2. Make Job's Covenant with your Eyes, at these this Sin enters, *2 Pet. 2. 14.* Eyes full of Adultery, that cannot cease from Sin; the Eye tempts the Fancy, and the Fancy works upon the Heart. Democritus the Philosopher pluck'd out his Eyes, because he would not be tempted with vain Objects; the Scripture bids us not pluck out, but watch over our Eyes. 3. Take heed your Words kindle not unclean Thoughts in your selves or others, *1 Cor. 15. 33.* Evil Communication corrupts good Manners. *Psal. 141. 3.* Set a watch, O Lord, before my Mouth, keep the door of my Lips. 4. Look in a special manner to your Heart, *Prov. 4. 23.* Keep the Heart with all keeping. Every Man has a Tempter in his own Bosom, *Math. 15. 19.* Out of the Heart come evil Thoughts, and thinking of Sin makes Way for acting of it.

therefore suppress its first Rinnings. 5. We read of the *Man of Sin*, who would *draw* *unto* *himself* *all* *the* *children* *of* *disobedience*. *1. Cor.* *7. 10.* A wanton Diet, naked Breasts and painted Face, the Deviations to Lust, they are like Vintners Signs inviting to go in and take of the Liquor. 6. Beware of lascivious Books and Pictures, which be special Incitements to Lust. 7. Beware of Excess in Diet. *Eccles.* *31. 10.* *When they were at the Tables in the Morning, then every one despised his Wife.* *1. Pet.* *5. 8.* *Shun Idleness, for it is the Devil's Haven,* when Temptations are born in thick and threed, when *Devil* walked idly on the Top of his House, then he spied our *Idleness*. 8. Get the Fear of God in your Heart, *Prov.* *16. 6.* *By the Fear of the Lord Men depart from Evil.* This assisted Joseph to repel the Temptation of his wanton Mistress, with that choice Argument, *How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?* *Gen.* *39. 12.* *Howard* calls holy Fear, the Door-keeper of the Soul. For consider, God sees thee in the Act of Sin, the Clouds are no Canopy, the Night no Courtain to hide thee from his Eye; he will be a just Witness against the unclean. *Mal.* *2. 5.* who can disprove this Witness, for he is both Witness and Judge. *Heb.* *12. 1.* *Whosoever will judge, let him first be judged.* Few that are intangled in this Sin recover out of the snare. *Prov.* *2. 19.* *yet it brings on their eternal Ruine.* *Prov.* *7. 26, 27.* the Fire of Hell extinguishes the Flame of Lust. Therefore endeavour to please the Lord, and thou hast his Promise to escape this snare. *Ecc.* *7. 26.* Dedicate thy self, Soul and Body to the Lord, and to his Service, attend on him in the way of Duty, and pray for his preventing and Soul-establishing Grace.

Observe 2. *This evil in Gospel Societies and Assemblies, there be a great many who are Profane and Atheistical in their Hearts, and this hath the Ascending over them in their Life.*

I shall here shew wherein this Profaneness consists. More generally, the Word in the Original Greek imports one who has a bitter Frame of Spirit against the first Table of the Law, one of an impure Mind toward God, opposite to Godliness; who neglects and spurns at holy Things, rolling himself in his own Riches, Pleasures and Honours; despising God, his Grace and Glory in the Heart. So it is taken, *1. Tim.* *1. 9. Chap. 4. 7.* More particularly, This proceeds from gross *Atheism*, *Infidelity* and *Libel*, a profane Soul gives no Credit to one Truth in all the Gospel, these make no more Impression on their Hearts, than if they were fabulous fictitious Stories, except out of Heathen Poets; and not so much, for the *God of this World hath blinded their Eyes*, and made them Lock-fast under Fetters of a darkned Understanding. *2. Cor.* *4. 4.*

By way of Improvement, I shall open the Evil of this profane Set of Heart. 1. In the fearful Soul-destroying Properties of it. 2. In the tremendous and terrible Effects of it. As to the First, This profane Atheistical Frame of Heart is the most sinful of all other Sins, as leading to the Violation of all God's Commands at once; it hath in its Bosom a Contrariety to every part of God's revealed Will. 2. It is the Root of Bitterness whence every other Sin does spring, every sinful Action derives its Descent from this. 3. It is an habitually rooted Principle, no transient Act, nor moveable Disposition, nor slow-paced Faculty, as all Faculties are till they be habitate, but it is an habitual Evil both in respect of Permanency and Facility in acting. 4. It is a pregnant Evil, it is all Sin virtually, all Sin is ingrossed in its Bosom, and is revealed out in sinful Acts, it is the Nursery, Spawn, Seed and Womb of all other Evils. 5. It is most Extensive, it is a Contagion overpreads the whole Man, and seizes on every Part; in the Mind, its Enmity; in the Thoughts, Vanity; in the Understanding, Blindness; in the

the Will, Rebellion; in the Confession, Secrecy; in the Heart, Hardness; and in the Affection, Carnality.

Secondly, Consider the tremendous Consequences and Effects of this unbelieving and profane Temper of Heart, which may bring every Person to hang and abhor it. Now I may join up and resolve all these Effects into this, which is comprehensive of more than we can say in Words. It is to lay up the Wrath of God against him, and the Wrath of God is to be condemned eternally. John 3. 18. Condemnation is unavoidably follows Unbelief. Unbelief is to be condemned eternally, and this will surely appear, if you consider, 1. What it excludes Men from. 2. What it includes Men under.

First, Unbelief excludes from Pardon of Sin. John 8. 24. If ye believe not, ye shall die in your Sins. 1. That dies under the Curse of all his Sins, must needs die in a State of Wrath and Condemnation. If a Man may be saved without Pardon, then may the profane unbelieving Heart expect to be saved. It excludes a Man from all saving Benefits that come from the Death or Sacrifice of Christ. It excludes from the living Efficacy and Operation of the Gospel, by thrusting up the Heart against it, and crossing the main Drift and Scope of it, which is to bring up Men to the Terms of Salvation. It excludes a Man from Union with Christ, Faith being the Bond of that Union. So that the unbelieving profane Heart may as soon conclude to be saved without Christ, as without Faith. And finally, It excludes from Glory. Heb. 12. 14. Follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord. It builds up the Heart, all sorts of sin and

Secondly, This profane unbelieving Set of Heart includes and shuts Men up under great Guilt and Millery. It reflects the greatest Dishonour on God. It makes him a liar. John 5. 10. It makes a Man guilty of the vilest Contempt of Christ, and the whole Design of Redemption managed by him; it includes the sorest spiritual Judgments that is, or can be inflicted in this World on the Soul of Man. 2 Cor. 4. 4. and it shuts a Man under all the Threatnings of the Book of God, among which that is the Capstone, Mark 16. 16. He that believeth not shall be damned. So that a profane unbelieving Heart shall in the End inevitably solicit Damnation.

Observe 1. The profane unbelieving Soul to override Times & Antidotes, that they place their main Happiness in. They say, we will show no God, they value not the Light of God's Countenance, give them God, Man, and Oily that, is their all. They prefer the Man of Sin, before the Son of God.

To make this Note more plain and useful, I shall show, 1. What is imported in overvaluing the things of Time. 2. Wherein this Temper of Spirit expresses it self. 3. Wherein lies the Evil of it.

First, To Overvalue the things of Time, imports to affect the Things of a present World, as their chief Good and last End. Now, what have they in the World to make up this? 1. John 1. 9. The Light that is in the World, is the Light of the flesh, the Light of the eye, and the Light of the World. This is the Worldlings Trinity, which he so much adores and idolizes. Pleasure, Riches, Power, Honour, these are imported in this Trinity. But Bread in the Text, that to tickle up the Head and Heart of Man, that he undervalue the Birth Right, and gives the Preference to these. 2. It imports an habitual Weight or violent Bent of Heart, carrying them naturally and natively after their lower End for themselves, and in Expectation of Happiness from them. This is lively expressed Heb. 12. 1. Every one of us, which by the Learned is applied to inordinate Love to the World, it is expressed also by the Bent of the Heart. Heb. 12. 9. My people are bent to

1. *Thou shalt not have the Evil of this Our-thing, but the thing of the World, which renders this Disposition dangerous and detestable.* And 2. *The Subtlety of it is such as cheates Men of their Senses wherewith, it is dressed up in self, deally in the Attire of Vertue; that it may not be discerned.* *1. The first is called, The Cloak of Carnality.* It is a Sin that wears a Cloak; it goes under a Disguise. 2. *This Temper of Spirit is most dangerous; it choaks all that is good; it is an Enemy to Grace; it hinders the Efficacy of the Word.* *1. Many Sermons lie dead buried in Earthly Hearts; it deadens the Heart to Preaching, and hinders Preparation for Death.* *2. It is a Mother-Sin; it is a Radical Vice.* *3. Tim. 6. 9. But they that will be rich fall into Temptation, and into a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; for the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some covered it with, they have crept from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* This made Devils forsake Christ. *4. Tim. 4. 10. It was said by the very Heathens, Quid non movebitur pectus, quia cupit scire a sapiente.* This greedy itch after the World breaks all Gods every Day, once makes you love things that are false, lose what you ought to have, and buy things at a far greater Rate than they are worth, as the Loss of your Soul and Eternity. 5. *This Temper is most dishonourable to Religion; it makes you profess your Hopes to be above, yet your Hearts are below, licking the Serpent's Dust; To be born of God, and yet buried in a Dunghill.* *6. Jer. 45. 5. And seeketh their great things for thy self; seek thou thine own, and thou shalt be made Noble by thy New-birth, and glorious by the Divine Office? Does thou, does thou seek Earthly Things, and seek them now, when the Ship is sinking? Art thou trimming thy Cabin, but do to now, to make a Man the Object of Gods Abhorrence.* *7. Psal. 10. 3. The language whom the Lord abhorreth; I know, whom God abhorreth, he himself, and his Counsellors, where ever it comes.*

Observe 4. *That where Men put such Value on these Earthly Tastes, they will readily sacrifice the best Things of their Souls, the main Interests of their Church and State in Exchange for them.* For so much is included in this Birth-right, and all be let go for a Masses of Bread by profane Bishops, and Tithe-allowed Jades, Demes, Demerits, and others. In the Explication of this Point, 3 things must be looked to. First, What is Imported in this Birth-right? Secondly, What is it for them to Sell or Renounce it? Thirdly, How come they to do so? *1. Our Birth-right, which we should not sell.* Now, this comprehends, 1. *A Right of Rule and Government, and the due Rights and Rules by which this is to be managed to prevent Tyranny and Arbitrary Power.* An Earth-worm will sacrifice all this to a little petty Honour, Bishops and Bishops. Take heed ye who are or may be advanced to publick Places, and shall have Voice in more Supreme Judicatories, that ye be tender of this Part of the Birth-right of this Free and Independent Nation, that we be not Robbed and Supplanted of our due Rights and Privileges. 2. *Another Part of the Birth-right was, The Prebend, the Administration of Holy Things, as ye would be tender of the Government of the State, so also of the Church, now so happily Sealed by Law since the last glorious Revolution, as most agreeable to, and founded upon the Word of God, which has been handed down by the Blood and Writings of our Noble ancestors, and is a Shining Gem in Christs Memorial Crown.* The Man that dare make Sale of this Part of the Birth-right of this Governed Church of Scotland, may provoke God to make him a Muger, Adversary, a Terror to all round about. More, *Birth-right* takes in all these Spiritual Privileges and Advantages made Offer of to us in this Gospel, which yet are sold off, and valued and poor

Hebrews XII. Verse 16.

233

He that loves Silver, shall not be satisfied with it. Solomon had put all Creatures in a Limbeck, and filled out the Quintessence of them, and behold all was Vanity, Eccles. 2. 11. Tho' ye had all worldly Things, they cannot pacifie an awakened Conscience or troubled Mind: when King Saul was under this, all his Crown Jewels could not give him Comfort, 1 Sam. 28. 15. Unfaithful managing honourable and publick Trusts may add to, but not ease of it. Take also a View of these who have been Despisers of the World, in its Pleasures, Profits and Honours, as the Primitive Christians, who lived in the World above the World. Luther used to say, he was never tempted with this earthly Temper and Disposition: Enoch walked with God, his Affections were sublime, he took a Turn in Heaven every Day. 2y, Be more in Love with spiritual things, and then ye will desire earthly things less; the former will veil the latter with Darkness; had ye got a sight of Heaven, ye would trample on all sublimary Honours with Dignity, like the Woman clothed with the Sun: For above is the Tree of Life, the Mountain of Spices, Rivers of Pleasures: The Honey-comb of everlasting Life always dropping, a pure Air to breathe in, not troubled with Fogs and Mists of Sin to infect it, but the Sun of Righteousness enlightens that Horizon continually with his glorious Beams: A View of this City of Pearls and precious Stones would make all Times Toys evanish.

Here ends a Sermon preached before the Election of the Magistrates of Edinburgh.

I proposed, in the second Place, for opening the Doctrine I am now insisting upon, to explain what it is to sell these noble Ingredients of this spiritual Birth-right. Consider then, First, How Esau sold them in the Text, he was ready to part with them, he did it on a slight Occasion, he ratified the Bargain by an Oath; and he was so regardless of what he had done, as after the Power of the Temptation was over, he rose up to eat and drink. 2y, These spiritual Privileges are sold when Preference is given to other things, and these postponed, *Who will sell us our Soul?* is your chief Concern: Other things get on the Throne, and spiritual Mercies are thrust to the Door. 3y, When you make other things the Objects of your Complacency and Satisfaction, whereas Creatures are given only for Use, God in Christ is the alone Object of our Fruition and Delight, Psal. 73. 25, 26. 4y, When other things have the Ascendant over the Soul, so as its under Subjection, thereunto, when they take away the Heart, Hosea 4. 11. The Word in the Original signifies first a Conflict and then a Conquest. 5y, When they spend themselves with Care and Sollicitude for things of Time, like *Martha*, troubled about many things, whereas the *one thing needful* is neglected and slighted. 6y, When the chief Affections of the Soul are led Captive, and enamoured by these things; but cold and dead in the Concerns of the spiritual Birth-right. 7y, When these are the chief Fond proposed for Encouragement in all Cases and Distresses, and on this they sing a *Requiem*, *Soul take thee Ease, thou has Goods laid up for many Days, eat, drink and be merry.*

Thirdly, I shall give some Reasons whence it is that many Men sell off such a noble Birth-right; and 1. Because they are Ignorant of the intrinsic Vorth and real Value thereof, and therefore they despise it; Christ is the Stone which the builders despised, they see no Force nor Comeliness in him, no Beauty to attract their Desires. The preached Gospel, both in the Instruments and Subject of it is undervalued, Hos. 8. 12. *I have written to him the great things of my Law, but they were counted as a strange thing.* The Sacraments and Seals of the Covenant are but simple things to a carnal Eye, eternal Life is not seen verapt up under these: The Duties of Religion in their Power and Spirituality is utterly unknown, and so laid aside; and their Rooms filled with passing things

of Time; and the Society of the Godly is despised as the Off-spring of the Earth, tho they be really the sweetest Off-spring of the Earth, and more excellent than their Neighbours. 25, Because they are absolute Strangers to the State of their Souls, they consider not they are born Fetics of Wrath, *Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World, Eph. 2. 12.* and therefore they care not, nor value these things proposed as a suitable Remedy, *the whole world are the Physician, they were never sickned at the Heart, and therefore they are Galilees, care for none of these things.* 26, They are under so great Affiance with Rich and Corruption, that what favours thereof exactly squares with their sensual Desires and Inclinations. 27, They are bolstered up by false Grounds of Hope, and taken on these as Grounds of their Comfort, they rest on golden Dreams, and being fallen a sleeping, the Devil rocks them secure to Hell. 28, Because they are void of any serious Impressions of Death and Eternity, but live as if never to die; they are so fond on Pleasure, Honours and Profits of the World, that they are loath to think ever to part with them, as having their Happiness intirely wrapped up in them, so Death never enters their Thoughts. They look on Death as a thing started, go to them who are young, and tell them they must die, it is true, say they, old Men need consider and prepare themselves for it, but for us there is no such haste yet. Tell old Men, ye must die, their Age tells them so, but they hope their Decay is not so great, nor so imminent, but they may yet weather out a few Years more; thus they put the evil Day far off. The Apprehensions of Death bring so great Fear and Terror, that they cast off the Thoughts of it: O to think this Body that is so much pampered should be laid in a Bed of Rottensness, this is a melancholly Subject! 29, These Exercises that most immediately concern our leaving things in Time, and preparation for Eternity, are cast their Inclination and Genius; which Job, Chap. 14. 14. gives us in one Word, *All the Days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.* Now waiting, as it respects Eternity, includes Meditation, Expectation and Preparation: First Meditation, a Man who waits on a worldly Business of Concern, how soon will his Mind and Thoughts be in musing on it; and who waits on Death's coming, he considers both the Certainty of it, that it will come, and the Uncertainty of it as to its time, and eternal State it leads to; his Thoughts are highly concerned about these, and who so numbers his Days, will be so wise as to secure his Birth-right. Next, as to Expectation, that Man may be said to wait for Death, who in every Action of his Life and Alteration of his Condition, says to himself, well I must die, tho Riches and Honours break in on me as a Flood, yet I must die, this makes him live as a Stranger on the Earth, and secure his Birth-right. Last of all, Preparation is an Exercise included in waiting for Death, it is above the Reach of Words to express how much depends on this, it is that our whole Life should have Respect to every thing we do, should have a Tendency to make Death comfortable, and nothing more than securing our spiritual Privileges, this will entitle us to the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. But most part of the World are unconcerned about these Exercises, and therefore no wonder they quite and make Merchandise of the Heavenly Birth-right and Privileges which are in their Offer.

Use 1. of Information, Is it so, That where Men put such Value on worldly Things, they will readily renounce the best Things of their Souls for them. Hence we may infer, 1. How much the Love of the Birth-right does transcend the Love of a *Shadow of Adam*, the Object of the former is much more Noble and Spiritual, the Greatness of the Object makes the Affections the more intense. 2, Respect to our spiritual Privileges, the Birth-right God

God puts in our Offer, and to a *Morsel of Meat* divides all the World; there is no middle State betwixt these two Opposites, if thou supremely love a *Morsel of Meat*, thou hates the *Birch-right*. 3ly, The Love and Care of profane Worldlings is spiritual below God. 4ly, It is rare to find an ordinate and regular Respect to the *Morsel of Meat*, how few in using this World do not abuse it? who can say as the Apostle, Phil. 4. 12. *I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need.* 5ly, That where love to the *Morsel of Meat* has the absolute Supremacy, they cannot be reckoned on as truly Serious or Godly. Oh how many worldly Professors are cut off here! Many cover their Love to the *Morsel* under the Vizard of professed Love to the *Birch-right*. 6ly, An earthly minded Man is a compound of Contradictions, and his Heart is drencht in Earth; he pretends to serve God, but intends nothing but to serve his Lusts. 7ly, Here is the Reason why so few are bettered by the Word preached, *Mark 4. 18, 19. These are they which are sown among Thorns, such as bear the Word, and the Cares of the World, and the Decailfulness of Riches, and the Lusts of other things, entering in choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful.* 8ly, These who are of this Temper are unnatural, they hate their own Souls, Prov. 8. 26. *They that hate me love Death.* O cursed are they who cry up the VWorld and down Christ.

Use 2. For Caution to such as profess Respect to the *Birch-right*, and yet their Love to the VWorld's *Morsel of Meat* is far beyond it, how poor and narrow is the former? And that makes them fall under that fearful Curse, 1 Cor. 16. 22. *Anathema Maledicta, Enoch's Prophecy, Jude Verl. 14. 15.* and imports a binding over to the great Day of Judgment, to the coming of the Lord; Oh what a hungry Paradise have they whose Love feeds not on Christ, but on things of Time!

Use 3. Here is Matter of doleful Lamentation and Regret, that in the Days of so much pretended Love to the *Birch-right* of spiritual Privileges in our Offer; yet that painted shadows, and dirty Clay should run away with our Love: That the golden Pleasures of this idol World should find so much Room in our Hearts, to fall down and Worship this old Whore; what sad Chains and Fetters are these the World's Blandishments.

Use 4. Of Trial. If ye be guilty of this sinful Temper of Heart, to stir you up, consider, 1. The Danger of it, it hazards your Loss of Heaven, makes it exceeding difficult, if not altogether impossible. 2ly, The Secrecy of it calls for diligent Search into the Chambers of Imagery, every Room whereof is filled with this Idol, and thou ye be apt to say as Jacob to Laban, Gen. 31. 32. *With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live;* yet it may lie hid in the Tent covered among the Stuff. This is evident, because every Man void of the Grace of God puts himself in God's Room, and in place of his spiritual *Birch-right* offered in this Gospel. The graceless Man minds himself more than he minds God, aims at his own Glory, when he should aim at God's, rests on and loves himself, honours and seeks himself; he makes his Understanding his God, by preferring his own Wisdom to the Wisdom of God, making his own Judgment his Guide, not the Word. It is God's Will ye accept Christ on the Terms of the Gospel, and live Holy; but it is your sinful VWill not to do it, and this is complied with. Others make their Bellies their God, Phil. 3. 18. they do more for their Bellies than they will do for God, care more what they eat and drink, than how they serve and honour God.

God: Some make their Pleasures their God, either intellectual or sensual, *Jude* vers. 19. Others make their Credit their God, preferring their Reputation in the World to the Honour of God, when they can more patiently see God dishonoured, than themselves disparaged. And finally, some make Wealth and Riches their God, when their Hearts and Minds are more set on these than on God. Nothing more common among Men, and yet nothing more difficult than to convince them of it.

But if your Conscience will impartially answer a few Questions, you may find cause to cry out, I am guilty of this profane *Esau*-like Disposition. Let me then ask you, Do ye not value these things External, more than the Light of God's Countenance? Do ye not love them more than Holiness? Do ye not desire the Increase of them more than Growth in Grace? Do ye not delight in them more than in Communion with God? Do ye not grieve more for Disappointments in them, than for God's withdrawings? Are ye not more affected with worldly Losses, than Soul-maladies and Distempers? Think ye not earthly Enjoyments greater Security than the great and precious Promises? Are not Thoughts of them more welcome and pleasing than Thoughts of Christ, and of Heaven? Do not ye esteem others more for these, nor for their Interest in God? Are not these your Hope and Security against the evil Day? Lastly, Do not these make you omit holy Duties, or do them in a careless and heartless Manner? Is it not plain from all these, that your Hearts are carried idolatrously after a *Morsel of Meat*, and for it ready to forego the most noble heavenly Privileges in your Offer?

Next, Let us search what are the Acts of Worship which are given by earthly Persons to things of the World. As 1. VVhat Knowledge do ye most affect? The Soul will be still prying into that it counts most Excellent. Count ye the Knowledge of Christ so Excellent, that all other things, when compared to it, is but Drops and Dint? Or, Do ye say to God, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, *Job* 21:10. 2. VVhat is it ye most endeavour to make sure of, to make your own? Give ye all diligence to make your calling and election sure, as the Lord calls you, *2 Pet.* 1:10. Or, Are ye content with weak Hopes and meer Probabilities? 3. VVhat do ye praise most? Take ye all Occasions of speaking great Things of the Name of Christ, that is a good Sign? But if ye praise your selves and others most upon VVorldly Accounts, this is a Sign of an *Esau*-like Disposition of Spirit. 4. Are ye willing to part with all for God? A Man will be ready to lose all rather than what he esteems more than all, the Disciples *left all to follow Christ*. 5. VVhat are your Thoughts most bended upon? It were a good Sign, if you could say with the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 63:6. *I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches*, *Psal.* 139:18. *When I awake I am still with thee*. But alas, Are not your Thoughts of God few and rare? Are ye not unmindful of him whole Days? Are not Thoughts of other Things more welcome and pleasant than these of God? Find they not easier Admission and freer Entertainment? 6. VVhere are your Affections? Or, what do ye fix them upon? That on which these are set, ye worship as God. VVhat do ye most love? VVhat do ye most fear? If ye find a Cheerfulness in drawing near to God in Spiritual Duties wherein he is to be enjoyed, a Fear lest the World draw you away from your Duty, and a Desire for an Interest in Christ as your only Portion, without which, and some Discoveries of his Love, ye cannot rest satisfied; I say, if it be thus with you, ye have received the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, *John* 14:17. But if on the other Hand ye be backward to Spiritual Duties, your Delight and Desire chiefly terminate upon earthly Pleasures, and this not a Burden that

that ye are grieved with, if ye can rest, satisfied without an Interest in Christ, without the Sense of his Love, or Intimations of his Favour, then I say ye are of a profane Esau-like Temper, who, for one *Morsel of Meat*, would quite the Birth-right and the Blessing.

Use 4. Of Exhortation. To shun this Earthly Temper of Spirit, to press home this Duty on your Consciences, consider 1. That if you be thus Earthly and Covetous, you forfeit the Inheritance, *Ephes. 5. 5. No covetous man who is an idolater, hath any Inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.* O sad and irreparable Loss! If it were an Inheritance of no great worth, it were no great Matter, but it is an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fades not away, reserved in Heaven. 2. Consider how the Scripture represents this Sin, it is called *Worshipping of Devils*, *Deut. 32. 17. Whoredom and Adultery*, *James 4. 4. and Enmity with God*, *Idolatry*, *Coloss. 3. 5.* It is a principal Character of Anti-christ, *The Whore of Babylon, the Mother of Fornications*. 3. It will blast the Prosperity of your Souls, endanger the Life of Holiness, keep Grace in a languishing Condition. And if it prevail, will in the End lead to Apostacy, *2 Tim. 4. 10.* 4. This will provoke God to withdraw the Light of his Countenance from you; no wonder there be an Eclipse when the Earth gets betwixt you and the Sun of Righteousness. 5. If you continue in this Temper, some sore Afflictions shall reach you, *Jer. 2. 19. Hosea 2. 3, 4, 5, 6.* And it will make your Entrance to Glory difficult, if not impossible, *Mark 10. 23—26.*

Use 5. Of Direction. How to guard against this Temper, 1. Get your Natures renewed by the Grace of God; without this all other Means will be Ineffectual. 2. Mortify your lusts, *Coloss. 3. 5.* When *Delila* would destroy *Samson*, she enquired where his Strength lay? The Strength of this Temper lies in unmortified Lusts; Therefore search them out, be ashamed of them, acknowledge them with all their Aggravations, cut off the Occasions that Nurish and Support them, beat down your Bodies, and bring them into Subjection, Cry to God for Strength against this Multitude; Bewail them as your greatest Afflictions, and act Faith on Christ crucified, and by the Power of it draw crucifying Virtue from him; It is by his Strength only ye can conquer. 3. Get right Apprehensions of the Things of the World, look on them as the Spirit of God represents them: What did *Samson* or *Solomon* find in Beauty? Or *Haman* in Honours? Or *Judas* in Money? 4. Get an Interest in God and trust in him, study his All-sufficiency, and believe that he is above all, and more than all, that he can satisfy all your Desires, entertain all your Delights, and secure you against all your Fears. There is that in him that is infinitely beyond all your External Enjoyments, by the Eye of Faith ye may see more in him than the whole World comes to, as much as your Hearts could wish, infinitely more than these who have most of the World without him. What Reason is there then to be so careful about your *Morsel of Bread*, about Things of a present World? Is he enough for Millions of Angels and glorious Saints? Enough for all Creatures in Heaven and Earth, and yet not enough for thee alone? When thou has so much more than is enough for thee, and all the World beside, should thou be so Sollicitous about thy *Morsel*? If the Faith of this were suitably exercised, thy Cares about Worldly Things would vanish. Believe therefore, there is all that is good in God, all the good ye need take thought for or be careful about, ye may have it in him, whether they be Earthly Things or Spiritual, believe there is no good thing to be had from any thing without God, ye cannot squeeze one Drop of Good out of them, except he let it out, *Micah 6. 14, 15. Hagai 1. 6.* 5. Believe he can communicate the Good of all these Things to us, tho

tho' they of themselves cannot do it; and thus he can do easily, plentifully and seasonably. And *Finally*, Believe he can secure you from what ye are solicitous to avoid; or ease you from what ye are careful to be rid of: Losses, Troubles and Sufferings are all at his disposing, he can prevent them when they are far off, he can remove them when they are near on you, *Daniel 3. 16, 17.* He can secure you from the Evil of them, *Job 5. 19. He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.* And he can do you good by Afflictions, better than ye had wanted them, it is the joint Testimony of his People, *It is good for me I have been afflicted, Psalm 119. 71.* All this Good he is willing and ready to do for thee and every Believer, *Psalm 34. 10. Psalm 84. 12. 13.* Get more Subjection to God, if ye would be free of this careful anxious Temper about an Earthly Moriel; Get your Judgment and Will more Subjected to mind the Will of God, so as to rest satisfied in what he counts best for you, he has assured his People that it shall go well with them, and that he will dispose of their Concerns to the best Advantage. 6. Live within Views of Eternity, walk still in sight of your everlasting Condition, your Eye be oft on it, your Mind and Thoughts be oft taken up about that endless State ye must shortly enter on, to ease for that is of more Importance than all things of this Life, *2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. Chap. 5. 1.* A Traveller who has but a Night to stay in a Place, will not be so solicitous about his Habitation, as how to arrive at the End of his Journey.

HEBREWS XII. Verse 17.

For ye know how that afterward when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected: For he found no Place of Repentance, though he sought it carefully with Tears.

IN the former Verse we had an Account of *Esa's* Sin, and in this of his Punishment; Where we have more particularly, *First*, The Note of Inference, *For*; *Secondly*, The Certainty of the Punishment, *ye know*; *Thirdly*, The Method he took to divert his Punishment, *he would have inherited the Blessing, he sought it with Tears*; *Fourthly*, The Punishment it self, notwithstanding of his vain Endeavours to prevent it, in these Words, *he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance*; *Fifthly*, The time when he was thus Punished, *afterward*.

First, The Force of the Inference in the word *For*, signifying the Efficacy of the Example proposed, which lies in a deep pondering of the sad Consequences of *Esa's* Sin: Think, says the Apostle, seriously what followed thereupon, something that *Esa* little foresaw, which was his Ruine; and if ye think not on, and forecast it, it will be yours, too: Therefore ye had great need to guard against this Sin. *Secondly*, The Certainty of *Esa's* Punishment for his Sin ye know, they knew it from Scripture, where it is particularly recorded, he supposes them acquainted with the Scriptures, and what is contained in them, as it is the Duty of all Christians to be: Besides, there is a peculiar Force of Persuasion and Conviction, when we argue from *Mens own Knowledge and Conviction*,

one, you know this your selves; therefore let it be of great Weight with you. Thirdly, In the Text we have what *Eſau* deſigned, or the Method he took to divert the Punishment, in these words, *He would have inherited the Blessing, he sought it carefully with Tears.* *Eſau* esteemed himself the Presumptive Heir of the Patriarchal Blessing, and knew not that he had renounced it virtually, and deservedly lost it by selling his Birth-right. He knew that there were choice Things contained in the Blessing, especially a flourishing Estate in the World, or Multiplication of Posterity, and a Power over Enemies: This made him desire it, tho' being a profane Person, he had no Sense of the Spiritual Privileges of it; and so might Tiptoe the unbelieving Jews, who cleaved to the outward Things of the Blessing, but rejected Christ who was the Substance of it. His Care about the Blessing is also expressed in the manner of his seeking, *He sought it carefully with Tears.* In *Abraham* tells us, *Gen. 27. 38. And Eſau said to his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.* And *Eſau* lift up his voice, and wept. No doubt Godly *Isaac* had great Compassion to his profane Son, but he submitted to the Will of God: But *Eſau* wept for the Consequences of his Sin, but not for the Sin it self; So it was not the Sorrow of a true Penitent, but of a profane Man in outward Anguish. Fourthly, In the Text we have *Eſau's* Punishment, *He was rejected, he found no place for Repentance; He was rejected, or (as some Translate it) he was Reprobated.* He was rejected from the Covenant of Grace, and the Blessings thereof, signified by his Father's Refusal of the Patriarchal Blessing, and is proposed as a Type of Reprobates, *Rom. 9. 11, 12. He found no place for Repentance;* the Repentance he sought was the Change of his Father's Mind to give him the Blessing, which could not be obtained, for he had no thought about turning from Sin, and turning to God; for he immediately took a Resolution to act like *Cain* and kill his Brother. If it be asked, Was not this severe and peremptory to deny a Divine Blessing to one who was so earnestly seeking for it? It may be answered, It was very just, for he sought when it was too late, he had sold his Right long before, and another was Inherited in it, he had Mis-improven his limited Day of Grace, and he sought not the Blessing in the right Manner, his Tears did not proceed from inward Sincerity, he sought it from Instruments but not from God, he sought the End but used not the right Means, Faith and Repentance: Fifthly, In the Text we have the time when *Eſau* thought to have got the Blessing, but met with this surprising Punishment of being rejected afterwards: This was forty or fifty Years after he had sold his Birth-right, which he did when very young, but when he expected the Blessing, *Isaac* was very old, *Gen. 27. 2.* All this time he had no Sense of his Sin in selling the Birth-right, but falling into a new Distress, it fills him with Perplexity. Now, *Eſau's* Example should teach all the Hearers of the Gospel to take heed lest they slight the precious Offers of the Gospel, and profanely apostatise from the Ways of God; For such shall meet with surprising Judgments in Life, or at Death. From this Text

Observe 1st. *Those who live under the Gospel, are bound to know and be acquainted with all that is contained in the Word of God's Word.* Ye know, or at least should, God expects it of you.

Observe 2^d. *That this Knowledge of God's Will revealed in the Scripture, is an excellent defence against Apostacy.* For this End it is here proposed by the Apostle.

Observe 3^d. *God has set up fearful Instances of the sad and fatal Ruine of Apostates in former Generations, as *Benjamin* and *Adoniram*, so few People from the like in succeeding Ages.* *Eſau* in the Text is singled out as one eminent Instance.

Observe

Observe 4th. That all who turn Apostates from God and Religion, shall fall into dreadful Surprises sooner or later. Esau went on prosperously forty or fifty Years, yet he falls in a Maze of Perplexity and Horror.

Observe 5th. That there is a limited Time of the Dispensation of Grace, beyond which Men shall not be admitted to a participation thereof. If the Season be despised and contemned, they are left in an irrecoverable Condition who are guilty of such Provocations.

Observe 6th. That the Time of the Dispensation of Grace be limited, yet there be not a few Men and Women, who sit that golden Season, and squander away those precious Hours, taken up about a morsel of Meat, while they should have secured the Birth-right, and after the Season of Grace is over, tho' they seek it with Tears, they cannot regain it.

Observe 7th. That Sin may be the Occasion of much Sorrow, when there is no Sorrow for Sin. Men may repent that in the Consequences, which they love in the Cause.

I return to Observe 1st. That who live under the Gospel, are bound to know and be acquainted with what is contained in the Record of Gods Word. For, says the Text, Fe know, which imports, ye should know, God expects it of you.

In Explication of this Point, I shall, First, shew what Knowledge is necessary. Secondly, Prove that it is necessary. Thirdly, What are its Properties. Fourthly, What is its Excellency.

As to the First, There is a twofold Knowledge now that is necessary to us. 1. A Literal or Historical. 2. A Practical or Experimental Knowledge. First, A Literal or Historical Knowledge of the Principles of Religion, as they are revealed in the Scripture, so as to be able to form a distinct Idea or Notion of them in our own Minds, and to give some tolerable Account of them to others; Of this literal or speculative Knowledge, we may further remark, 1. That it is Natural, being taught and acquired by ordinary Means, as Reading, Hearing, Meditation and Converse, and rendered more plain and easy, by the Clearness of the Apprehension, Solidity of Judgement, Fidelity of Retention, and the common Work of the Spirit; And hindered by the Want of these: 2. This speculative Knowledge without Practice is not sufficient to Salvation; Some of the wise Heathens knew not, but glorified him, not as God, Rom. 1. 21. Some of the Christian Church profess to know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate, Titus 1. 16. If this Knowledge were saving, the Devil who is in the deepest Abyss of Misery, might be in the Height of Happiness, he knows God, because before his Fall he enjoyed him, he did profess to know Christ, when his own Disciples scarce knew what he was, Luke 4. 34. 3. Tho' this Knowledge be not saving, yet it is very useful and necessary, it is the Foundation upon which all practical saving Knowledge is builded, no Superstructure can be without this Foundation, Heb. 11. 6. He that comes to God must believe that he is, and a remembrance of them that diligently seek him. Ignorance is a damning Sin, Isa. 27. 18. Hos. 4. 6. 2 Thess. 1. 8. Every Christian must know his Misery by Nature, the Contrivance of Salvation by a Redeemer, the Way of making use of the Salvation offered in the Gospel by Faith, and the Nature of Sanctification and Holiness in Heart and Life. This Knowledge is also useful to reclaim Men from gross Sin, and to justify Gods Proceedings before the World, it is peculiarly promised of Gospel Days, That the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, Isa. 60. 1. Tho' every Person be obliged to advance in Knowledge, yet some more than others, these who live under the Gospel ought to know Christ more distinctly than those who lived under the Old Testament, because now he is more plainly revealed, and those who live in purely Reformed Churches, should know more than those who live under Popish

Darkness

Darkness, where Ignorance is converted, the Master of Deceit, and the Bible hid from the People in an unknown Tongue. Those who have more Taste, Wit, and Capacities, should know more than those who are deprived of these Advantages, lest they fall under their Reproof. Heb. 5. 12. We 3. 7. those who are called to Teach others, ought to know more than others, for the Priests have shall profess Knowledge. Mal. 2. 7. It is a long Judgment when the blind lead the blind, and both shall fall into the ditch. Math. 15. 14. And to a Word, every man should endeavour to gain as much Knowledge as he can by the Means of the Knowledge he hath, especially of Truths necessary to Salvation, or that are opposed by cunning Advantages, for Negligence is contrary to the Ingenuity of a Christian, and where less may be useful, Contrivance is necessary to make the way to Heaven plain, easy and comfortable; and our Lord tells us To whom much is given, of him shall be much required, Luke 12. 48. More carry out than hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, Math. 23. 12.

The second Kind of Knowledge that is necessary, is Practical and Experimental, which not only lights in the Head, but sinks down to the Heart, produces Holiness in Life and Practice, and acquaints the Soul with the Pleasure and Excellency of true Piety. Of this the Apostle speaks, 1 John 3. 20. We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 2. 13. 43. Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commands: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commands, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. All other Knowledge compared to this is but meer Ignorance, this enlivens the Soul with spiritual Life, this makes the Soul conform to Christ, Gal. 2. 20. This is distinct and satisfying, and this leaves blessed Effects, humbling the Soul, Job 42. 5, 6. and engaging to love God, 1 John 4. 8. We may further Consider, 1. Some Impediments of this Knowledge, as Ignorance which flights it, or despairs of attaining it, Truth falls into Contempt among the Ignorant, Slothfulness apprehends Difficulties in the way to it, Prov. 24. 7. Wisdom is too high for a Fool. Curiosity runs beyond on beside it, puffed up with Conceit to penetrate further than God has revealed, Job 32. 7. Col. 2. 18. and Error militates directly against, contradicts and opposes it. 2. This Knowledge expresses itself by giving such a Discovery of the Glory of God as the Soul trembles at his Greatness, accepts of the Offers of his Mercy, and imitates his Holiness. Such a View of the Excellency of Christ, as engages the Soul to accept of him for Righteousness and Strength, according to the Terms of the Covenant; to love him above all things, and to love him cheerfully: Such a Sight of the Promises, as the Soul feeds on them; of the Commands, as to obey them; of Ordinances and Duties, as to delight in them; of the Gain of Afflictions, as to bless God for, and submit to them; of our own Wants, as to loath our selves, and to employ Christ to supply them, and such a Knowledge of the pure Joys of Heaven, as to long for the Possession of them.

I proposed, Secondly, to prove that this Knowledge is necessary. Now this is evident, 1. Because it is the great Design of the Word written and preached to bring us to this saving Knowledge of, and fixed Settlement in the Truth, Eph. 4. 21. 22. every Blow of this Hammer as to drive in and fasten the Nails of the spiritual Building. 2. This Knowledge is a Christian's Excellency and Honour, Prov. 17. 27. A Man of Understanding is of an excellent Spirit; it may be said of him as of Daniel, Light, Understanding and excellent Wisdom is found in him, Dan. 5. 14. The hoary head is a Crown of Glory in the way of Righteousness; it is a noble Sight to see an old experienced Disciple, to see Silver Hair adorned with golden Vertues. 3. Because if this Knowledge of the Truth be

wanting, we can never suffer for it in the Day of Trial; nay you who want it will desert Christ's Colours in a Day of Battle, and run over to the Enemies Side, and this will be highly provoking to God, *Psal. 78. 57. 59.* The Apostate drops like a fallen Star into the Devil's Mouth. *45.* Without this Knowledge ye can never thrive in Religion, but be tossed to and fro by every Wind of Doctrine; be like a Bone out of Joint, or a Tree out of Root. *46.* There are many things to shake you, if ye be not settled in the Knowledge of the Truth; *1 John 2. 26.* Seducers are the Devil's Factors, and are very cunning, sometimes by good words and false speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple, *Abom. 16. 18.* Sometimes they pretend to extraordinary Piety, that People may admire them, and suck in their Doctrine, tho' they be really tainted with Lust, Pride and Avarice: Sometimes they Cheat, by laboursing to reproach and vilify sound Teachers, *Gal. 4. 17.* And sometimes they preach Doctrines of Liberty, as *Antinomians*, That Men are freed from the Moral Law as a Rule, as well as from the Curse of it; That Christ has done all for them, and they need to do nothing. So they make the Doctrine of free Grace a Key to open the Door to all Licentiousness. *47.* The Devil mainly endeavours to hinder our Advancing in this Knowledge, he envies your being more Happy than himself; therefore he beclouds the understanding Faculty, that the *Light of the Gospel of Christ may not shine into it*; *2 Cor. 4. 4.* Satan's Kingdom is a Kingdom of Darkness, and he hates the Light. *48.* This Knowledge enriches the Mind, it is a Lamp to our Feet to direct us in our whole Course of Christianity, as the Eye directs the Body; It is an Armour of Proof, furnisheth us with Weapons to fight against Adversaries; It is the holy Seed upon which the rest of the Graces grow; It is the Seed of Faith, *Psal. 9. 10.* and of Love, *Ephes. 3. 17, 18.* A Man cannot love what he is ignorant of; A deaf Man cannot love Musick, nor a blind Man sweet Colours, nor an ignorant Man Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, I am to explain some of the Properties of this Knowledge: And 1. It is Powerful, Lively and Operative; it is *mighty to cast down strong Imaginations*. 2. It sends divine Truths home with a sweetening Relish; It renders the Name of Christ to a Believer, as *Ornament poured forth*, *Song 1. 3.* O how sweetly does this Knowledge slide into the Heart of a poor humbled melting Sinner! but all other Knowledge is tasteless. 3. Its plain, clear and distinct Truth is opened up to the Understanding, and the Understanding is opened to receive it; the veil is taken off the Heart, *2 Cor. 3. 13—16*; and the Soul doubts and staggers no more, but can venture all on the Truths it hath known and learned, *Prov. 8. 9.* The words of wisdom are all plainness him that understands, and right to them that find knowledge: Once a Martyr said, *I cannot dispute, but I can die for Christ*. 4. It makes deep and lasting Impressions on the Soul, *Psal. 119. 98.* Thou through thy commands has made me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. It is written on the Believer's heart, *Jer. 31. 33.* 5. This Knowledge is Saving, it makes the Soul wise to salvation, *2 Tim. 3. 15.* A great deal of other Knowledge may go to Hell with Men, but this is life eternal to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. 6. It is Transforming, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* We all with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory. God casts them whom he teaches this Knowledge, into the same Mould of these Truths which they learn from him.

Fourthly; Let us consider the Excellency of this Knowledge, which cannot well be told: For 1. It is the Mother and Nurse of all the Graces of the Spirit, if the Mind be Darkened there can be no Grace in the Soul; Knowledge goes before Faith, no Man

can assent to Truths except he know them: Therefore the Apostle says, *I know in whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. And the Psalmist, *They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee*, Psal. 9. 10. There can be no Repentance without Knowledge, the times of ignorance and Impenitence are the same in Scripture Saile, Acts 17. 30. If there be no right Conception of God, there can be no Sense of the evil of Sin, and Contrariety of it to his holy Name. No Fear without it, Who can fear the Majesty of God, if he be quite ignorant of the same? No Patience without Knowledge, none can patiently endure the Cross, but such as apprehend the Goodness and Fulness of Christ, to Supply and Comfort under it: Patience founded on another Bottom, is but brutish Stupidity: The Apostle lays the Courage of the believing Hebrews, Chap. 10. verses 32—34, upon their Spiritual Illumination, *After ye were illuminate ye endured a great fight of afflictions—ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in your selves, that ye have in Heaven a better and enduring Substance.* You cannot love nor delight in an unknown Christ, you cannot obey the Commands of God, unless you know them and their Spiritual Extent: Nay, without this you will be ready to say with Pharaoh, Exod. 5. 2. *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?* Without Knowledge there can be no Growth, no Strength, no Stability in Grace, Rom. 15. 14. 2 Pet. 3. 18. Phil. 1. 9. Coloss. 1. 10. Ephes. 4. 13, 14: Grace and Knowledge keep equal Pace, the Spirit of God links them together. 2. Knowledge assists and directs to perform acceptable Worship and Service to God; without Knowledge we can never Worship him in a right Manner; If we Worship him affectionately and cheerfully, we must know that he is Amiable; If with fear, we must know that he is Powerful and Just; If in Holiness, that he is strictly Holy: Without Knowledge we may worship some Falshood in stead of God, and at best but as Paul spoke of the Athenians, Acts 17. 23. *I found an altar to the unknown God, whom therefore ye ignorantly worship.* But saving Knowledge directs to worship God frequently, fervently, sincerely, in Faith, and in Spirit, and in Truth: It directs to Read, Hear, Pray, Praise, and do every Piece of God's Service in an acceptable Manner. 3. Knowledge lays the Foundation of all our Comfort; Christ revealed is called, *The Consolation of Israel*, Luke 2. 25. The more of Christ is known, the more Solid and Spiritual shall our Comfort be, all our Joys are Streams flowing from this Fountain. 4. The Saint's Happiness consists in the Knowledge of God, John 17. 3. The Happiness of God consists in his compleat and perfect Knowledge of himself, and his own Perfections and Delight in them: And since he is the Supreme Good, and is pleased to communicate himself to his Creatures, their Happiness can only be attained in their Knowledge and Enjoyment of him. The Happiness of Angels is to behold the face of God, Matth. 18. 10. The ultimate Blessedness of the Saints in Glory is to see God, 1 John 3. 2. 1 Cor. 13. 12. And the Miseries of the Damned lies in his Absence, 2 Thess. 1. 9. 5. This Knowledge is more profound and large than any other Science; these are but Shadows, this a boundless bottomless Ocean; there is *Height, Depth, Breadth and Length* ascribed to it, which no humane Line can fathom, it surpasseth knowledge, Ephes. 3. 18, 19. It is the most noble Subject that ever Man spent his time upon, these who beat their Brains at other Studies, weary themselves at a low Game; But Angels study this, and stoop down to pry into it, being the Secrets of Eternity that lay hid in the very Bosom of God, Ephes. 3. 8, 9. 6. No other Knowledge is to be compared to it; other Knowledge is Natural, this wholly Super-natural, immediately from Heaven, Isaiah 11. 29. Other Sciences cannot be attained by many weak Christians, How could they attain the Knowledge of learned Arts and Languages? But the poorest dullest Body by the Help of the Spirit of Grace may attain the Saving

Three Reasons may confirm this Point.

The first Reason I adduce to prove, *That saving Knowledge is a noble Antidote against Apostacy*, is, That this so inseparably links Believers and Christ together, as no Storms nor Temptations shall be able to separate them, when they once know in whom they have believed, then they can say, *I am persuaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. 8. 38, 39.* There be many things which threaten to separate betwixt Christ and them, as a Multitude of Crosses and Afflictions one upon the back of another; a List whereof we have, *Rom. 8. 35.* Some trying Dispensations of long Continuance, some withdrawings of God's Favour, and fears of his Wrath, which made *Asaph, Psal. 77. 9:* say, *Has the Lord forgotten to be gracious?* Sometimes Corruptions are let loose, and these are in Hazard to run the Saints headlong into Apostacy and Backsliding from God, these are Depths arising as it were from the bottomless Pit. Sometimes Satan renews fresh Assaults, he desires to have you, *that he may sift you as Wheat, Luke 22. 31.* Sometimes the Violence and enraged Malice of an evil World stirs up Reproaches, Tribulation, Sword and Distress to cause them Apostatise from Christ: And frequently the Depths the Saints fall under as to their particular Cases, thinking them singular, and that no others are like them, weaken their Hands, and hazard their Apostacy.

But notwithstanding of all these Hazards, such as have the saving Knowledge of Christ shall be preserved from Apostacy, for God's Love to them is everlasting, *John 13. 1.* the Union betwixt Christ and them by virtue of their saving Knowledge of, and Covenanting with him is Eternal, the Covenant in which they mutually indent, Devils and all Men, shall never be able to loose one Pin of it, do their utmost, it is never to be forgotten, *Jer. 50. 4.* and the Power by which Believers are secured is Almighty, *1 Peter 1. 5. Kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation.*

Secondly, This saving Knowledge of God cannot but be a nonstop Antidote against Apostacy, for it removes and carries off what keeps the Soul from Christ, and adhering to him; it delivers from Error whereby the Soul is prejudiced against Christ, from Sin, which is thought but a Trifle, till the Glasse of God's Law discover it exceeding sinful, *Rom. 7. 13.* and from wrong Thoughts of God, we think him to be such an one as our selves, *Psal. 50. 21.* till he make us know his infinite Greatness, his awful Holiness and severe Justice; and then we cry, *Who can stand before this great and dreadful God!* Saving Knowledge discovers the Danger of our delaying the Concerns of another Life, when we are now on the very Brink of Eternity; and it discovers that Mortality will not pass for real Conversation, *It is not every one who says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,* it costs striving and the pangs of the new Birth, therefore we must let go false, and fix upon solid Grounds of Hope.

Thirdly, This saving Knowledge prevents Apostacy, because it discovers what may sufficiently allure the Soul to keep by Christ and his Ways, so great is the gain of Godliness, as makes them cry out, *Henceforth we will not go back.* They see that if they forsake Christ in a Day of Trial, they lose their own Soul, God, Christ and Heaven, and get in Exchange for these, eternal Indignation, Wrath and Displeasure, *Heb. 10. 38.* *If any Man draw back, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him.* They see that unworthy as they are, yet if weary and heavy laden with Sin, they have God's welcome to come and share of Heaven's Indemnity, *Matth. 11. 28. John 6. 37.* They see if they return to, and abide by Christ and his Service, they shall have rich Entertainment, they shall get

the fatted Calf, the best Robe, the Ring and the Bracelets. O how are they regaled even in Ordinances and Duties; they are set down under his shadow, and his Fruit sweet to their taste, they get the Keys of Heavens Treasures put in their Hands, and all Fulness of the unsearchable Riches of Christ to make use of at their Pleasure, where could they speed better, or fare more sumptuously? Therefore they will never change their royal Master, *this God shall be my God for ever*, his Servant I shall be, I will not go back blow the Storm never so hard: In following the Ways of Christ they get Correspondence kept with the Court of Heaven, they send up their cries, and he returns them Answers; so as they know him to be the *Hearer of Prayer*. Sometimes in approaches to the Throne they get a view of the well ordered *Covenant*, and get Leave to set to their Name to all the Articles thereof, and thereon the Promises are performed to their Souls, and brought home with such a Divine Gale of Power and Presence, as erects their Confidence, confirms their Hope, and makes them go on glorying in God as their compleat Happiness. Sometimes they feel the *Love of God shed abroad in their Hearts*, so as they read their Title to, and Interest in him sure and uncontroverted; hence flows a spring Tide of Consolation, and much divine Fortitude and Courage, *Psal. 27. 1, 3, 4.* Yea and sometimes they are entertained with Foretastes, First-fruits and Prelibations of Glory it self, *Psal. 16. 9, 11.* *Therefore my Heart is glad and my Glory rejoiceth in my Flesh also shall rest in Hope, thou wilt shew me the path of Life, in thy Presence is fulness of Joy, at thy right Hand Pleasures for evermore.* Now cries the Soul, when I have so much in Possession, and so much more in Hope, I will never be prevailed with to sell my Birth-right for a *Morsel of perishing Bread*, I will never forsake Christ.

Observe 3. God has set up fearful Instances of the sad and fatal Ruine of Apostates in former Generations, as Beacons and Monuments to scare People from the like in succeeding Ages. Esau is singled out as an eminent Instance in the Text.

To prepare this Doctrine for our Use, I shall, 1. Shew who they are who may be justly called Apostates. 2. Give some Instances of God's making such Monuments of his Judgment.

As to the first, Apostates are such, who being once enlightened by the Word of God, in the Knowledge of Salvation, do afterward cast behind their backs their Profession, and intirely abandon the Service of God. And this Apostacy is either, 1. Through Fear and Infirmitie, as *Peter's* was. Or, 2. Willingly and with Deliberation, not pressed or constrained thereto by any external Means, but the Man freely and of himself forsakes the true Religion, and Marches over under the Banner of Satan and Antichrist. And this is of two Sorts, either, 1. When a Man does simply forsake the Profession of the Truth, to follow Superstition and Idolatry, without attempting any thing but the meer Denial of the Faith. Or, 2. When after his Revolt he not only professes the contrary Religion, but also endeavours to advance it by all Means possible, and that on the Ruines of the Truths of God, and these who maintain them. By this you may see there be three Sorts of Apostacy, one forced and compelled, a second voluntary, free and deliberate, and the third both voluntary and malicious. Now tho' all these be very sinful and dangerous, yet the Second and Third are the most destructive.

Secondly, I am to give Instances of God's Wrath pursuing such Apostates, making them Monuments of his Judgements, which may make all of you guard against Apostacy, and tremble and fear lest ye be involved in such a terrible Snare. The first Kind of Apostates are such who fall away through Fear and Infirmitie, tho' they pretend the Weakness and Feebleness of the Flesh, yet doubtless they are guilty before God, on whom

whom they reflect so great a Dishonour, therefore he signalizes his Anger on them by exemplary Instances of his Judgements, as we find from Scripture, *Peter* being convinced of this Sin, *went out and wept bitterly*, *Matth. 26. 74. 75.* How dreadful Judgments the Lord did threaten, and fulfil upon *Aaron* and the *Israelites* for this Sin, you may read, *Exod. Chap. 32.* and upon *Rehoboam* and the *Jews*, *2 Chron. Chap. 12.* and upon *Adanasseb*, *2 Chron. 23. 11. 12.* *Cyprian de Lapide* gives some remarkable Instances of God's punishing such Apostates, one went to the *Capitol at Rome*, where the Temple of the Idol gods was, to deny *Christ*, which he had no sooner done, but he was stricken Dumb. Another Woman having denied *Christ* and eaten Meat sacrificed to Idols, and going to the Baths, she was so seized with an evil Spirit, as she chop'd her Tongue in pieces with her Teeth, teared her own Flesh, became her own Executioner, and thus under a Load of Wrath expired. Among many Examples in later Ages, most remarkable is that of *Francis Spira* an Italian Lawyer, who having embraced the Protestant Religion, and maintained it with great Zeal, was complained of to the Pope's Ambassador, to appease whose Wrath he went to *Venice*, and there openly reprobated the Reformed Religion, and engaged to obey the Pope's Laws; but very soon after this he fell sick, his Conscience check'd him for Apostasy, he died in *Despair* refusing all Comfort, and concluded his wretched Days with Blasphemy, *Seiden Feb. 21.* One *Richard Denton* a Blacksmith in *Cambridge-shire*, once a great Professor, and Instrument in the Conversion of one *William Walsley* Martyr, who from Prison sent *Denton* some Money, and bade tell him, *He wondered he staid so long behind him, since he was the first who put the Scriptures in his Hand, and told him it was the Truth:* He returned this Answer, *I confess it is true, but alas I cannot burn.* But he who could not burn for the Cause of *Christ*, had his House set on fire, and all his Goods and himself burnt in the Bosom thereof, *Fox's Acts and Monuments, Page 1717.*

The second Kind of Apostates are such who without any Compulsion, or apparent Danger freely forsake God and Religion; there is an ancient Statute against such, *Deut. Chap. 12: If the Inhabitants of any City say, Come and let us serve other gods which ye have not known, thou shalt surely smite the Inhabitants of that City with the edge of the Sword, destroying it utterly, and it shall be an heap for ever, it shall not be built again.* We find in Scripture King *Solomon* inferior to none for Power and Wisdom, nor needing to fear any for Authority, yet after the Lord appeared to him twice, he fell away to Idolatry, *1 Kings Chap. 11.* and by this provoked the Lord to raise him up two Enemies, who wrought Ruine to him and his People, and *Jeroboam* one of his Servants was designed King over the ten Tribes. A second Example we have of *Jeroboam*, who forelook the true Worship of God, and set up the Calves of *Dan* and *Bethel*, when a Prophet of the Lord denounced the Wrath of God against him, *He put forth his hand, crying, Lay hold on the Prophet, and immediately his hand withered, and his House and Posterity was quickly cut off,* *1 Kings Chap. 13. 14.* A third Example we have in *Jehoram*, who tho' he had been Religiously Educate by his Father *Jehoshaphat*, and had seen his Zeal, yet turned an Idolater, marrying *Achaz's* Daughter; therefore the Lord stirred up the *Philistines* and *Arabians* against him, who wasted his Countrey, robbed his Treasures, and killed his Children, *2 Chron. Chap. 21.* A fourth Example we have of *Joash* King of *Judah*, who tho' he was Religiously Educate, and preserved from the bloody Hand of *Athalia*, by the Care of the good High-priest *Jehoiada*; yet after his Death he Apostatised, and fell into Idolatry, for which the *Syrians* overthrew him, *God struck him with grievous diseases, his Servants slew him, and he got not so much as a burial among the kings,* *2 Chron. Chap. 24.* And another Example you

you have of *Amaniah* King of *Judah*, who began his Reign well, pretending great Zeal for God; but after he overcame the *Edomites*, he brought home their gods, he worshipped them, and being reproved by the Prophet, he threatened him with Death; therefore the Lord so ordered, that the King of *Israel* overcame him in Battel, took him Prisoner, pillaged and ruined the City *Jerusalem*; and afterwards he was killed by a Conspiracy, 2 Chron. Chap. 25. We may also find many Instances of this Kind in prophane History; as, one *James Lacinus* a Divine of *Louvain*, who was well instructed at first in the Knowledge of the Truth, afterwards renouncing the same, he went to *Brussels*, where he made an Oration before *Charles* the fifth Emperor, against *Luther* and his Followers, but was so astonished no Man could understand what he said, and so was laughed to Scorn by the Court; returning again to *Louvain*, he fell in Despair, and continued Despairing and Blaspheming until he expired. *Felix*, one of the Treasurers of the wicked Emperor *Julian* the Apostate, to please his Master, forsook Christ; and going to a Christian Church scoffing, said, Behold with what Vessels they Minister to the Son of Mary: Immediately was seized with a vomiting of Blood, and his Genitals being purrified with Vermin, he died as a Monument of God's just Indignation, Theodoret lib. 3. cap. 13. *Sozomen* lib. 5. cap. 8.

The third Sort of Apostates, are such who not only forsake but maliciously oppose themselves to God and Religion, and persecute his Saints. Of these the Apostle speaks, *Hebr. 10. 26. — 32. If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.* — *Judas* who betrayed our Lord, was an Apostate of this kind, he is called, *The son of perdition*, *Joh. 17. 12.* and you all know what became of him, he hanged himself. We have many Tragical Examples of such Apostates in Church History, as, *Lucian*, who having professed Christianity for a Season under the Emperor *Trajan*, fell away and became so Prophane and Blasphemous, that he mocked and ridiculed Religion, whose End was to be torn in pieces and devoured of Dogs. *Porphyrie* was another of the same Kidney, after he had received the knowledge of the truth, from Anger that he was reproved for his Faults by the Christians, set himself against them, and wrote Books stuffed with horrible Blasphemies, to overthrow and discredit the Christian Faith; but finding how sufficiently he was Confuted, he died in a terrible Despair and Agony. *Julian* the Emperor, Surnamed *The Apostate*, being instructed from his Child-hood in the Faith, as soon as he got the Empire, maliciously revolted from his Profession, and with all his Power opposed and persecuted the Faith and Church of Christ, endeavouring to destroy the same; and resolves, at his Return from the War against the *Persians*, to leave no Christians alive: But God in his Providence so ordered, that his Army was defeat by the *Persians*, and himself shot thorow the Side by an Arrow, and filling his Hand with the Blood running from his Body, he threw it into the Air with these blasphemous words, *Thou has overcome, O Jesus of Galilee*, Theodoret lib. 3. cap. 25. *Cardinal Pool* in our neighbour Nation of *England*, while in *Italy*, professed the Truth, but afterwards turned a malicious Persecuter thereof in *Queen Mary's* Days, but died after her in the Space of a few Days, in horrible Grief, Terror and Fear, without any Appearance of Repentance. *Stephen Gardiner* Bishop of *Winchester*, in his young Years, zealously withstood *Papery*; but when he came to Honour, he furiously tore and afflicted the Church and People of God, devising cruel Deaths for them; yea, writing Books against the *Protestant Religion*, he was given up to Covetousness, Whoredom and Extortion: But behold the Lord laid his Hand upon him in Wrath, and struck him with

with so sad a Malady, that so noisom a Stink came from his putrified Body, that none of his Friends nor Servants could endure the Savour thereof, and diet yelling out horrid Blasphemies against God.

If it be asked, since Apostates are such Monuments of divine Wrath, *How comes so many Professors to turn back?* Answer 1. Their Love to the Body, and a temporal Life, is predominant beyond their Love to Christ, Grace, or Heaven. 2. Their Conscience is scared as with a hot iron, 1 Tim. 4. 2. so as they consider not the Danger of the Course they steer; Or, if it at any time awakes, they are so byassed as to Counteract its Light. 3. The Springs by which their Profession was fed and maintained, fail and dry up; the Wind that was in their Back, is turned and blows a Storm in their Face; no Preferments nor Honour is to be had for Religion, yea, keeping by it is now the losing of them, therefore they turn their Back on it. From this *Desire* take

One Use of Exhortation, View seriously these Influences as set up of God to prevent your splitting on this Rock of Apostacy. For *Minors*, Consider 1. If you desert Religion in a Suffering Time, How much Dishonour will it reflect on Christ? Where are now the Promises ye boasted of? Now when it is come to the Push, ye dare hazard nothing on the Credit of them? How will this open the Mouths of Enemies to Blasphemy? 2. Will thou stabb Conscience for a little Ease to thy Flesh and Bones? Who shall comfort thee when Conscience wounds thee? Farewel Peace and Joy, from that Day; Had Judas or Spira Peace? 3. Is not the publick Interest of Christ and Religion infinitely more than any private Interest of thy own? It was a noble Saying of a Christian when he petitioned the Emperor for a Temple, in which the Christians might worship God separate from the *Arians*, the Emperor tore and threw it away, saying, *Ask for thy self and thou shalt get it answered*: No, says the Christian, *If I cannot be heard in God's Cause, I will ask nothing for my self*. 4. Did Christ serve you so, when for you he exposed himself to infinite greater Sufferings both in Body and Soul, than ye can meet with? 5. Is not eternal Life worth suffering a moments Pain, *If ye suffer with Christ, ye shall also be glorified with him*, Rom. 8. 17. 6. Can ye so easily get off from the Society of the Saints, and give the right hand of fellowship to the Devil, and the wicked World? How oft have ye been benefited by their Counsel, and refreshed by their Company, Eccles. 4. 9, 10, 11. 7. Consider how terrible are the Threatnings of God's Word against Apostacy, Jer. 17. 5, 6. *Cursed be the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord, for he shall be like the heath in the desert, he shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land that is not inhabited*, Heb. 10. 26, 27. *If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries*, verse 28. *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him*. The Lord will say, *Take him devil, I have nothing ado with him*. How can Apostates look Christ in the Face at the great Day of Accounts, who now so shamefully desert him? Has he not forewarned you, Mark 8. 38. *Whoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels*. O the trembling Knees and quivering Lips that Apostates shall have at that Day.

If ye would be directed to guard against this Apostacy, I give you a few Advices; 1. Shun these Evils which lead to it; take heed that ye hold not the truth in unrighteousness, knowing much, but not living up to what ye know, entertaining a Knowledge that

that is not Operative either on Heart or Life. Take heed that ye live not in a Course of secret Sin, this was *Judas's* Ruine, he carried Smoothly under a Profession, but he was a Thief, *John* 12. 6. Thy secret Sinning will either break out at last, to the Observation of Men; Or, it will slide thee down insensibly to Hell, and leave thee only this Comfort, *That no body knows thou art there.* Beware of hypocritical Pretences to Religion, to accommodate thy false Ends, as *Judas* would sell ointment to give to the poor, which was only a Blind to cover his By-ends. Beware of Self-confidence, *Judas* was last of all the Disciples, who cried, *Master, Is it I?* *Math.* 26. 25. And take care ye live not unprofitably under the Means of Grace, *Judas* had the best of Means, but was not a whit better for them all, but more and more hardened. 2. If you would guard against Apostacy, some things must be done; As 1. Sit down and count the Cost of Religion before-hand, if ye set out in the Profession of Religion only for a Walk not for a Journey, mounted among Professors only to take the Air, not to engage in bloody Encounters persevering to the Death, ye are gone. 2. You must live by Faith, not by Sense, look to the things unseen, that are eternal, *2 Cor.* 4. 18. Ballance present Sufferings with future Glory, *Rom.* 8. 18. 3. Be sincere and plain Hearted in Religion, driving no Design but to save your Souls, if ye do otherways like *Demas*, ye will forsake Christ, *2 Tim.* 4. 10. 4. Experience the Power of Religion in your own Souls, as well as wear the Name of it, it is not a name to live that will do you service now; Many Ships are gone down to the Bottom, for all the brave Names of the Success, the Prosperous, the Happy Return, and the like, and so will you if real Grace be wanting: There is a Knowing in your selves by real Experience, that ye have in Heaven a better and enduring Substance, *Hebr.* 10. 34. This does a Soul more Service in a suffering Hour than all the splendid Names in the World. 5. Be daily crucifying the Flesh, denying your Self in all its Concerns for Christ, *Math.* 16. 24. He that cannot deny himself, will deny Christ in a Day of Trial. 6. Get a Stock of Christian Patience, quietly waiting on God under Trials, till he come to Support, Comfort and Relieve you, for he will come and he will not tarry. 7. Labour to keep in good Terms with your own Consciences, that all may be quiet within, and Conscience may not lash you for secret Sin, when the World persecutes you, but that in Christ ye may have peace when in the world ye have tribulation, *John* 16. 33. 8. Get Assurance of Salvation, and of an Interest in Christ; this makes Sufferers triumph in the worst of Deaths, *Rom.* 8. 18, 35, 37. 9. Be fraughted with Scripture Promises which your Faith has been used to feed upon, and from which ye have to Experience found Life and quickning Vertue at former Occasions; these will strengthen you to hold fast your Anchor-hold of Hope, *Heb.* 6. 19. and to triumph in the Lord, and not fear what flesh can do, *Psal.* 56. 4.

Observe 4. All who turn Apostates from the true Religion, shall sooner or later fall under dreadful surprising Strokes of God's Wrath. *Esau* went on Prosperously forty or fifty Years, yet he fell in a Maze of Perplexity and Horror.

I shall, First, Give Reasons why it is so. Secondly, Name some surprising Strokes God brings upon Apostates: Thirdly, Apply the Whole.

One Reason why God will visit Apostates with such surprising Strokes, is, Because this Sin reflects Dishonour upon all the divine Perfections; if God be Omniscient to know all thy Difficulties, infinitely Merciful to pity thee under them, and Omnipotent and All-sufficient to Succour, Support and Relieve thee, Why should thou distrust his Care, forsake his Way and fall into the Snare of the Adversary? *Jer.* 2. 5. What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me? 2. This Sin gives an Ir-religious

gious World, tainted with Atheism and Profaneness, Occasion to expose Religion and the Professors thereof, to Ridicule and Mockery, Crying, *Where is your God gone?* 3. The Apostacy of one Professor gives Occasion to many more, to split their Souls Interest on the same Rock, to the total Ruine and Overthrow thereof; What (say they) has such an one saved his Wealth, his House, and Family, by complying with the Court and Course of the Times, and may not I do so too? 4. Because such Apostates contradict clear Light, and run in the Face of plain Discoveries of Gospel Truths, which by their Profession they avouched, and yet now do trample upon, crying down Religion as a meer Imposture. 5. The Lord is concerned to punish such, to vindicate his glorious free Grace and long-suffering Patience, that has made great Offers, and waited long, after many Refusals, which being abused, at length a Note of Infamy must be put on the Contemners and Despisers thereof, with such an Inscription, *Lo this is the Man that made not God his Strength, but trusted in the Abundance of his Riches, and strengthened himself in his Wickedness,* Psal. 52. 7. The Lord will evidence the Faithfulness of his Threatnings, and inflict upon them the Judgments written in his Word.

Secondly, The surprising Strokes God brings upon Apostates, are 1. Surprising and Terrible Deaths, such was the Death of *Julian the Apostate*, and of others whom we named in the former Doctrine. 2. Sometimes the Lord leaves them under horrid Despair, their Hell is begun on Earth, as it was with *Judas* and *Francis Spira*. 3. Sometimes the Lord surprises them with sudden Judgments, as *Henry the fourth of France*, having for a great part of his Life been Protestant, when he came to the Crown of that Kingdom, he suddenly turned Popish: One *John Castile* suborned by Jesuits, stabbed him through the Upper-jaw, and wounded his Tongue; and a Protestant Minister told him, *Sir, you denied Christ with your Tongue, and ye got it wounded, beware lest you deny Christ in your Heart.* But in the Year 1592, when the King was passing in his Coach through the Streets of *Paris*, a notorious Villain stabbed him dead: Many signal Judgments the Lord inflicts upon Princes who renounce Christ for an Earthly Crown, as we may see even in our own Days. 4. Sometimes the Lord surprises such Apostates with extraordinary Judgments, as is recorded of *Peter Castellani* Bishop of *Maston*, who having great Riches turned his back on Christ, and mightily inveighed in his Sermon at *Orleans*, against the Profession of his Religion, making it known he had not only abjured it, but was a professed Adversary to it: This Man sitting in his Chair, fell into a strange Disease, which no Physician had ever seen or could search out the Cause of; for one half of his Body was extreme Hot burning like Fire, the other extreme Cold and frozen like Ice, and in this Torment with horrible Cries and Groanings he ended his Life, *Beard's Theatre* Page 92. But I need not multiply Examples of this Kind, the Threatnings of God's Word are express and terrible, and the Lord will be sure one time or other to see them execute.

Use 1. All ye who have forgot God, and Apostatised from him, be afraid, haste back to him from whom ye have so deeply revolved; for if ye do it not, he will tear you in pieces, in like manner as he has done others ye have been hearing of, he is a fearful and terrible Lord God, *Jealous*, and will not give his Glory to another.

Use 2. I exhort you that stand, take heed lest ye fall. To this end keep a jealous, fearing, watching Eye over your selves, be sensible of your own Weakness, and be strong in the Grace and Strength that is in Christ; live and spend on him, the Store-house is lodged in him, he has invited and welcomed you to come and shelter there in time of Trials, *Ija.* 26. 20. *Zech.* 9. 12. Here runs the river that makes glad the City of God. It is

is impossible ye can stand on another Footing, the Way through this evil World into the Land of Rest above, is so straitened with Difficulties, as ye cannot walk in it, without the Direction of Christ's Spirit, and Support of his Strength.

Observe *5th*. That there is a limited Time of the Dispensation of Grace, beyond which Men shall not be admitted to a Participation thereof, if the Season be despised and contemned, they are left in an irrecoverable Condition, who are guilty of such Provocations.

To prepare this Doctrine for your Use, I shall, *First*, Give a few Considerations for explaining the Nature of this Season of Grace: *Secondly*, Prove, That if once it be lost, it is irrecoverable. *Thirdly*, Who they are who thus lose their Season of Grace. *Fourthly*, Answer some Objections against this Doctrine.

First, For explaining the Nature of the Season of Grace, Consider, 1. The great Things of Time so depend on the small Wires of Time and Seasons in this World, as that may be done or neglected in a Day, which may be the Ground-work of Joy or Sorrow to all Eternitie; If you accept not Salvation now when it is offered, you shall be miserable for ever. 2. There is a special Nick of Opportunity, which gives both Success and Facility to the great and weighty Affairs of the Soul, to come before; it is Unsuccessful, to come after, it is irrecoverable for ever. 3. The Scripture plainly points out such a Season of Grace, 2 Cor. 6. 2. — *behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation*, where the Season of Grace is called a Time, by which is not meant the Flux Succession and Continuation of Time; but the Fitness of some Time beyond another for managing Salvation Work: This Season is also called a Day, which is a fit Occasion of doing any Thing, John 9. 4. or of receiving any Favour, Luke 19. 47. Next, It is called an accepted Time, *καὶ νῦν ὁ δεκτός καιρὸς*, it is well-pleasing to God. And lastly, It is a Day of Salvation, this is the Advantage, redounds to the Improvers of it, they get Salvation begun here in Pardoning and Sanctifying Grace; and compleated hereafter in Glory. 4. There is a two-fold Season or Opportunity of Salvation, one is Christ's Season for purchasing of it, Isa. 49. 8. *Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a time of salvation have I helped thee*. This Season our blessed Lord improved to the full, to our unspeakable Advantage: The other Opportunity of Salvation is ours, for receiving and applying of it, 2 Cor. 6. 2. Take heed you do not mismanage it. 5. There be two Things necessarily concur to make up the Season of Grace and Salvation; Namely, *External Means*, and, *An inward Work of the Spirit*. 1. *External Means*, the Means and Instruments of Salvation must be sent among a People, there must be a wide and effectual Door opened, as the Apostle calls it, 1 Cor. 16. 9. The Gospel must be preached Plainly and Powerfully, so as to gain some Souls. 2. When this effectual Door is opened by the preaching of the Gospel, the Spirit also strives, Gen. 6. 3. And when this Work is Effectual, it hath these Things with it, which are promising of a good Event. The Soul is engaged to serious and fixed Consideration, Convictions of Sin and Misery are rivetted and fastned upon the Heart, Psal. 119. 59. These Convictions are accompanied with spiritual, fervent and frequent Prayer, Acts 9. 11. These Thoughts settle on the Soul, ever haunts the Man, and engage him to loath Sin, Psal. 51. 9. and to be inquisitive after the Way of Salvation, Acts 2. 27. Chap. 16. 29, 30: And finally, They resolve in the Exercise of serious Repentance and closing with Christ, the Man stands no more at, *Shall I, May I delay?* when in the mean time the Season flees away, and the Opportunity is slip'd: But he makes haste, he lingers not to renounce former Sins with Abhorrence, to embrace Jesus Christ for Righteousness and Salvation, and to walk in the Way of Holiness. When these concur, it is a remarkable Season of Grace.

Secondly,

208

181

Secondly, I proposed to prove, that if this Season be lost it is irrecoverable. Now this may be evident from a few Scripture Testimonies, as Gen. 6. 3. *My Spirit shall not always strive with Man.* The Season of Grace ceases when the Spirit of God ceases to strive; To every thing there is an appointed Season, Eccles. 3. 1. Now God calls by the Gospel in a loving Manner, to allure us to accept of Salvation: But there will come a time, if ye refuse this Call, when the Lord will say, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting Fire.* Men must now have their Wills, Believe and Repent when they will, forsooth; and God must wait their Leisure, but time is coming when he will wait no more. You may see this evident also from the Example of Saul, 1 Sam. 15. 23. *Because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee;* the good Spirit was taken away, and the evil Spirit put in its Room. And our blessed Lord testifies, that the Jews had lost their Season of Grace, Luke 19. 42. *If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy Day, the things which belong unto thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* As from these Texts it is evident that the Season of Grace may be lost, so also from the sad Effects of such a Loss recorded in Scripture, when God desists from striving, his Mind and Heart is taken off that People, *Though Adonias and Samuel stood before me,* (says the Lord) *yet my Mind could not be toward this People; cast them out of my sight,* Jer. 15. 1. Then they are given over to the Power and Swing of their own Lusts, Psal. 81. 11, 12. Then their former Gifts and Abilities are blasted: Men of corrupt Minds, tho' once they had a bright like Light, yet when God forsakes them it ends in a Snuff: Then they are suffered to build on false Grounds of Hope, and then a Restraint is laid on all the Means of Grace, so as they do no good but harden them, Nosh. 4. 17. Isa. 4. 6. Isa. 6. 9, 10.

Thirdly, I proposed to enquire who they are who thus lose their Season of Grace. In answering this Question I will be far from fixing on any particular Person, but only name some general Characters whereby the Scripture points them out: As, 1. These who lived long under the Means of Grace, but never profit by them, *Math. 23. 34—39. Prov. 29. 1. He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his Neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without Remedy.* Take heed to this, ye who live under faithful Preachers, Parents, or Masters, but are ready to despise their Admonitions, and profit nothing by them; if God see ye continue to do so, he will give you over. I will limit no time, but see what the Scripture says, *Your Fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my Works forty Years:—So I swear in my Wrath, they shall not enter into my Rest,* Heb. 3. 9, —11. But what think ye of three Years, *These three Years I come seeking Fruit on this Fig-tree, and find none: Cut it down, why cumbereth it the Ground?* Luke 13. 7. But what think ye to one Year, *Lord, Spare it but this one Year,* Vers. 8. What think ye of forty Days, *Jonah 3. 4. Yet forty Days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.* And what say ye to a limited time only of some few Hours, *Math. 10. 12, 14, 15. When ye come into an House, salute it. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your Words: when ye depart out of that House, or City, shake off the Dust of your Feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorrah, than for that City:* As if our Lord had said, If they hear not, but obstinately despise that one Preaching, that one Offer of Salvation, seal them up for Ruine. If these things were believed, how carefully would ye hear the Gospel, and hearken to the Offers of the Grace of God? A second Sort who are like to lose their Season of Grace, are such, who have had more frequent Offers and Means of Grace, and many secret Workings and Strivings of the Spirit, many Resolutions to amend, but all come to nothing, *Ezek. 24. 13. Because I have purged thee, and thou wast*

not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. 3ly, These who have greatly grieved the Spirit of God, by sinning against Light, against Conscience and Suggestions of the Spirit, and are turned resolute in sinning, *Hos. 4. 17. Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone.* 4ly, These who have a common base Esteem of the Gospel, and the Ministry thereof, *2 Chron. 36. 16. They mocked the Messengers of God, and despised his Words, and mis-used his Prophets, until the Wrath of God came upon them, till there was no remedy. Prov. 1. 24, 25. Isai. 22. 12, 14.*

Against what has been said concerning the Season of Grace, Some may be ready to object, 1. If I be elected I shall improve the Season, if I be reprobate, do what I will, I cannot hinder my Damnation. Answer 1. *Secret things belong to the Lord, but revealed things to us and to our Children;* Duties are ours, Events are the Lords. 2. That be the Order in God's Working, yet not in our Knowledge, we must first secure that we are effectually called and have believed on Christ, and then according to the Word of God, we may be perswaded of our Election, *Rom. 8. 28. 2 Per. 1. 10.* 3. Dare ye argue so as to your Bodies, God has decreed how long I live, and what Day I shall die, therefore I will neither Eat, Drink nor Sleep, for I cannot prolong nor shorten my Days beyond what is appointed: If thou did so, would thou not be guilty of Self-murder, and if thou hearkening to such Temptations, despise the Season of Grace, thou wilt be guilty of thy own eternal Ruine. 2ly, Some may object, Why do ye limit God, ye take too much upon you, O ye Sons of Levi, for at whatsoever time a Man repents of Sin and believes on Christ, he shall obtain Mercy. Answer, Supposing the Season be gone, that time cannot be, the Text tells us, that *Esau found no place of Repentance.* How awful and terrible are the Threatnings of the Word against these to whom the Lord gave Space to Repent, and they repented not, *Rev. 2. 4, 5.* — 21. 22, 23. Objection 3. But I hope my time is not past, for I have a tender Heart. Answer, If thy Heart be really tender, thy Time is not past; and then thy Tenderness is attended with Labour and Diligence in Duties, sweating for hidden Treasures; beware of hardning thy Heart by Negligence in Duty, and sinning against God.

Use 1. You who find your Season of Grace yet continuing, O be thankful to God, and labour to entertain his Spirit striving with you. For this End, — endeavour to give Ear to the Checks of your own Conscience. — Beware of contradicting it's Light, by doing what it tells you is Sin. — Give Room to the Word, when Challenges by it are born home. — And lay sure Grounds of Hope, such whereof ye may not be ashamed when it comes to the Push, set up a Beihel Stone where ye Covenant with God, and ever after remember the place of vowing the Vow, and anointing the Pillar, the Man who draws back from these Vows, God will have no pleasure in him.

Use 2. For Reproof and Conviction to all who are yet in the gall of Bitterness and bond of Iniquity; there will come a Day, when, tho' ye seek Repentance with Tears, ye shall be rejected: The old Man thinks he has some time to Repent in, the young Man he thinks he needs not so much as enter in Parley with Religion. I warn you, now is the Day of Salvation, and if ye slight it, God shall pronounce that Sentence on you, and seal you up judicially under it, *He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.*

Use 3. For Terror to you who have squandered away your limited Season of Grace, Wo, wo, wo to such that ever they were Born; there are two Sorts of them, First, Some are insensible, who die like Stones as *Nabal* did. 2ly, Others are sensible, whose Eyes God has opened to see where they are, and whither they are going, it is heavy for old Friends

Friends to part, the People of *Ephesus* sorrowed most for that *Paul* said, *ye shall see my Face no more*, Acts 20. 38. When the Soul and Body parts it is sad, but when the Soul and God parts it is deplorable; when God takes his Leave, and says, *After this ye shall see my Face no more*, then if ye look above, there is nothing but an angry God; if below, there is nothing but an open Hell; O but this Condition be fearful! For when God is gone, all is gone; in Vain is the Help of Men or of Means, they are all Useless and Fyitless: Restraining Grace is then removed, Sin overflows all its Banks, and then all common Protection leaves thee, thou art a Burden to the Creation, and the Creatures are against thee; the Church-Stiles ye go over look up to Heaven and cry, Master, shall we break his Neck; the Roofs and Pillars, shall we fall down and sink him to Hell, and every bit of Meat or Drink, shall we choak him.

Use 4. of Exhortation. As ye would shun this Danger, redeem your Time, improve the present Season of Grace, subject to the Strivings of the Spirit, do not say with *Felix* to *Paul*, *Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient Season I will call for thee*; but with *Samuel* to the Lord, *Speak, for thy Servant heareth*. To press this Duty upon you, consider, 1. The fearful Case of such as are given over of God, suppose one should come from Hell with Fire about his Ears to tell what News; what could he say, but alas I misimproved my Season of Grace, I sit my Time, therefore now I am undone, beware of doing the like. 2ly, Consider the great Danger of putting off, if thy Will be stubborn to Day, it will be worse to Morrow; therefore to Day if ye will hear his Voice, *harden not your Hearts*, Psal. 95. 7, 8. 3ly, What precious Time have ye spent in ruining your Souls, 1 *Pet.* 4. 3. *For the time past of our Life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in Lasciviousness, Lusts, Excess of Wine, Revellings, Banquetings, and abominable Idolatries.* 4ly, Consider the Shortness and Uncertainty of your present Time, therefore now, *whatever thy hand finds to do, do it with all thy might*, for there is no work in the Grave, *whither thou hast*. Cry, Plead and Pray with strong Cries and Tears, *Lord, teach me so to number my Days, as to apply my Heart to Wisdom*, lest if ye delay any longer, it be too late.

Observe 6. That tho' the time of the Dispensation of Grace be limited, yet there be not a few Men and Women who sit that Golden Season, and squander away these precious Hours, taken up about a Morsel of Meat while they should have secured the Birthright, and when the Season of Grace is over, tho' they seek it with Tears, they cannot recover it. Thus it was with *Esau* in the Text, and so with many others, who trifle away the rich Opportunities of the Grace of God while in their Offer.

I may here, 1. Enquire, being so great is the Danger, how come many Men to sit the Season? 2. Give some Considerations to prevail with you to prevent this Danger, by embracing the present Season.

As to the First, There are these few Evils from which Men's sitting their Day of Grace takes its Rise, and as I pass I shall suggest a Caution and Direction to take off each of them. As, 1. *Bad Education* is the Occasion makes many neglect the Season of Grace; if a Gardener neglect to Sow, Dress and Manure his Garden, he scatters the Seed of Hemlock and Nettles into it; so do many Parents with their Children, if they teach them not to Pray, the Devil will improve that to Curse, Swear and Lie; thus even Children of godly Parents degenerate into Plants of a strange Vine, prove a Generation who know not the Lord God of their Fathers; and others go before their Children to light them down to Hell by their own Example: Such Families are Nurseries for Hell, the Day of Grace is despised by them and their Seed. To prevent this, let Parents consider what

what a fearful thing it is to ruin these that are *Bone of their Bones; and Flesh of their Flesh*, when they are under the Oath of God to the Contrair, one Day ye will wish ye had never been Parents, when the doleful Cries of your damned Children shall ring such Notes in your Ears, *O our sad Father, cruel and merciless Mother, whose Examples led me to this Misery*. Therefore, Train up a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, Prov. 22. 6. Also let Children born of wicked Parents consider the Interest of their own Souls; there was one Abijah in the House of Jeroboam, in whom was found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel.

A 2d. Evil that occasions the slighting of the Day of Grace, is Ignorance, many understand not their own Misery, nor the Remedy provided by Christ, nor Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and this is their Ruin, *Moses 4. 6. My People is destroyed for lack of Knowledge*. I intreat you consider God has created your Souls with a Capacity of knowing and enjoying him, and the *Law of the Lord makes wise the simple*, Psal. 119. 7. Is it not sad ye should be so knowing in things of the World, and yet ignorant in Matters of Salvation, The Children of this World are in their Generation wiser than the Children of Light, Luke 16. 8. Many under fewer Advantages than ye, come to a noble Degree of saving Knowledge, and if ye would seriously seek it of God, his Spirit should become your Teacher.

A third Rise of slighting the Day of Grace is, being *customed about many things*, your Heads, Hearts, and Hands are all filled with the Course of this World, Ephel. 2. 2. following the Example of the Multitude. Consider I beseech you, that in this you go against the express Law of God, Rom. 12. 2. 1 Pet. 4. 2. Exod. 23. 2. Others as much concerned, and as prosperous in the World as you, yet have disengaged themselves from these Courses, as Abraham, Jacob, Job, David, Josiah and others. But the Way you have chosen is marked out by Christ as the Way to Destruction, *It is the broad way that leads to Destruction; and many there be that go in thereat*, Matth. 7. 13.

A fourth Rise of slighting the Day of Grace, is, *Custom in Sin*, Jer. 13. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil*. This is so deep rooted, that they will not exchange it for Christ, Grace and Heaven; but consider its customary with God to punish such as continue in Sin with everlasting Wrath, but if you embrace the present Offer of Grace, and throw away your accustomed Sin, the Lord will abundantly pardon, Isa. 55. 7.

Fifthly, That many slight the Day of Grace, flows from *love to sensual sinful Pleasures*, which quicken and enslave the principles of Sin in us, every pleasant Sin has a Multitude of Customers cost what it will, Job 21. 12. *They spend their Days in Pleasure, and in a Moment go down to the Grave*; but consider that the Morality of Heathens has bridled their sensual Lusts. O shame, that *Idolatry* outbraves Christianity. Sensuality is the Bait by which Satan is fishing for immortal Souls, but there is a Fatal Hook upon it, Job 20. 12, 14. *Though Wickedness be sweet in his Mouth, yet his Abominations his Bowels is turned, it is the gall of Aspidochelone him*. Prov. 23. 31. *His Guests are in the depth of Hell*. But if ye would have real Pleasure ye are off the Rod to it, it lies in crucifying your Lusts, Rom. 8. 13. and in enjoying Christ's Presence, Psal. 16. 17.

Sixthly, That many lose their Day of Grace, flows from the *distracting Cares of the World* that eat up Time, Thoughts and Studies, so that there is no Room for Christ, or one serious Hour about Salvation, Mark 4. 19. But have not others as embroiled as thou minded their Souls to Purpose, if thou be poor in the World, your Case has some

Advantage beyond a full and prosperous State, as ye want the Blessings, so ye want the
 Smiles of the Rich: The greatest number of God's Children is the Congregation of the
 Poor; *Psal. 72. 19.* The Lord hath chosen the poor of this world, that he might bring forth the king-
 dom which he hath promised us, that the low and humble shall be exalted. *Psal. 135. 13.* With great comfort
 under all earthly Distresses, you may suck at the Breasts of these comforting Promises,
Heb. 12. 1. Isa. 41. 17. Psal. 34. 4, 10. Rom. 8. 28.

Seventhly, Groundless Presumption deceives many Souls, for as they think their present
 Security, they presume they have lost Office, while they are void of it, *2 Cor. 13. 7.* —
 They presume of such Mercy in God as they will not truly believe in an im-
 meritate Estate: And they presume they have time enough for Repentance before
 death. To prevent falling on this Rock, Consider, Are there not too many to be
 damned, that ye judge your selves too young to be seriously Godly? — If ye
 knew the Weight of Salvation Work, ye would rather think ye could begin too soon.
 Religion will take up all your time. — Others limited this work, saying
 ye gave one Stroke in Earnest to it, they were slack in Religion in their Childhood
 of Youth, as *Abigail, Constance, Thimothy* and others, what Monks had they to Godliness
 ye want? — The Morning of your Life is the Flower of your time, the firstest
 and finest of all your life for Religion, then your Hearts are tender and Affections
 flowing, therefore *Hebrews 10. 26.* *1 Cor. 13. 11.* *1 Tim. 4. 7.* *1 Tim. 4. 8.* *1 Tim. 4. 9.*
 If this proper Season pass, it is not probable ever ye be gathered afterwards, here are
 the Examples of Conversion in old Age, *2 Tim. 3. 10.* *2 Tim. 3. 11.* *2 Tim. 3. 12.* *2 Tim. 3. 13.*
 the Generality of the Damned owe their eternal Damnation to this.

Eighthly, Many lose the Season of Grace by *drinking in pleasures*, *1 Pet. 4. 2.* *1 Pet. 4. 3.* *1 Pet. 4. 4.* *1 Pet. 4. 5.* *1 Pet. 4. 6.* *1 Pet. 4. 7.* *1 Pet. 4. 8.* *1 Pet. 4. 9.* *1 Pet. 4. 10.* *1 Pet. 4. 11.* *1 Pet. 4. 12.* *1 Pet. 4. 13.* *1 Pet. 4. 14.* *1 Pet. 4. 15.* *1 Pet. 4. 16.* *1 Pet. 4. 17.* *1 Pet. 4. 18.* *1 Pet. 4. 19.* *1 Pet. 4. 20.* *1 Pet. 4. 21.* *1 Pet. 4. 22.* *1 Pet. 4. 23.* *1 Pet. 4. 24.* *1 Pet. 4. 25.* *1 Pet. 4. 26.* *1 Pet. 4. 27.* *1 Pet. 4. 28.* *1 Pet. 4. 29.* *1 Pet. 4. 30.* *1 Pet. 4. 31.* *1 Pet. 4. 32.* *1 Pet. 4. 33.* *1 Pet. 4. 34.* *1 Pet. 4. 35.* *1 Pet. 4. 36.* *1 Pet. 4. 37.* *1 Pet. 4. 38.* *1 Pet. 4. 39.* *1 Pet. 4. 40.* *1 Pet. 4. 41.* *1 Pet. 4. 42.* *1 Pet. 4. 43.* *1 Pet. 4. 44.* *1 Pet. 4. 45.* *1 Pet. 4. 46.* *1 Pet. 4. 47.* *1 Pet. 4. 48.* *1 Pet. 4. 49.* *1 Pet. 4. 50.* *1 Pet. 4. 51.* *1 Pet. 4. 52.* *1 Pet. 4. 53.* *1 Pet. 4. 54.* *1 Pet. 4. 55.* *1 Pet. 4. 56.* *1 Pet. 4. 57.* *1 Pet. 4. 58.* *1 Pet. 4. 59.* *1 Pet. 4. 60.* *1 Pet. 4. 61.* *1 Pet. 4. 62.* *1 Pet. 4. 63.* *1 Pet. 4. 64.* *1 Pet. 4. 65.* *1 Pet. 4. 66.* *1 Pet. 4. 67.* *1 Pet. 4. 68.* *1 Pet. 4. 69.* *1 Pet. 4. 70.* *1 Pet. 4. 71.* *1 Pet. 4. 72.* *1 Pet. 4. 73.* *1 Pet. 4. 74.* *1 Pet. 4. 75.* *1 Pet. 4. 76.* *1 Pet. 4. 77.* *1 Pet. 4. 78.* *1 Pet. 4. 79.* *1 Pet. 4. 80.* *1 Pet. 4. 81.* *1 Pet. 4. 82.* *1 Pet. 4. 83.* *1 Pet. 4. 84.* *1 Pet. 4. 85.* *1 Pet. 4. 86.* *1 Pet. 4. 87.* *1 Pet. 4. 88.* *1 Pet. 4. 89.* *1 Pet. 4. 90.* *1 Pet. 4. 91.* *1 Pet. 4. 92.* *1 Pet. 4. 93.* *1 Pet. 4. 94.* *1 Pet. 4. 95.* *1 Pet. 4. 96.* *1 Pet. 4. 97.* *1 Pet. 4. 98.* *1 Pet. 4. 99.* *1 Pet. 4. 100.* *1 Pet. 4. 101.* *1 Pet. 4. 102.* *1 Pet. 4. 103.* *1 Pet. 4. 104.* *1 Pet. 4. 105.* *1 Pet. 4. 106.* *1 Pet. 4. 107.* *1 Pet. 4. 108.* *1 Pet. 4. 109.* *1 Pet. 4. 110.* *1 Pet. 4. 111.* *1 Pet. 4. 112.* *1 Pet. 4. 113.* *1 Pet. 4. 114.* *1 Pet. 4. 115.* *1 Pet. 4. 116.* *1 Pet. 4. 117.* *1 Pet. 4. 118.* *1 Pet. 4. 119.* *1 Pet. 4. 120.* *1 Pet. 4. 121.* *1 Pet. 4. 122.* *1 Pet. 4. 123.* *1 Pet. 4. 124.* *1 Pet. 4. 125.* *1 Pet. 4. 126.* *1 Pet. 4. 127.* *1 Pet. 4. 128.* *1 Pet. 4. 129.* *1 Pet. 4. 130.* *1 Pet. 4. 131.* *1 Pet. 4. 132.* *1 Pet. 4. 133.* *1 Pet. 4. 134.* *1 Pet. 4. 135.* *1 Pet. 4. 136.* *1 Pet. 4. 137.* *1 Pet. 4. 138.* *1 Pet. 4. 139.* *1 Pet. 4. 140.* *1 Pet. 4. 141.* *1 Pet. 4. 142.* *1 Pet. 4. 143.* *1 Pet. 4. 144.* *1 Pet. 4. 145.* *1 Pet. 4. 146.* *1 Pet. 4. 147.* *1 Pet. 4. 148.* *1 Pet. 4. 149.* *1 Pet. 4. 150.* *1 Pet. 4. 151.* *1 Pet. 4. 152.* *1 Pet. 4. 153.* *1 Pet. 4. 154.* *1 Pet. 4. 155.* *1 Pet. 4. 156.* *1 Pet. 4. 157.* *1 Pet. 4. 158.* *1 Pet. 4. 159.* *1 Pet. 4. 160.* *1 Pet. 4. 161.* *1 Pet. 4. 162.* *1 Pet. 4. 163.* *1 Pet. 4. 164.* *1 Pet. 4. 165.* *1 Pet. 4. 166.* *1 Pet. 4. 167.* *1 Pet. 4. 168.* *1 Pet. 4. 169.* *1 Pet. 4. 170.* *1 Pet. 4. 171.* *1 Pet. 4. 172.* *1 Pet. 4. 173.* *1 Pet. 4. 174.* *1 Pet. 4. 175.* *1 Pet. 4. 176.* *1 Pet. 4. 177.* *1 Pet. 4. 178.* *1 Pet. 4. 179.* *1 Pet. 4. 180.* *1 Pet. 4. 181.* *1 Pet. 4. 182.* *1 Pet. 4. 183.* *1 Pet. 4. 184.* *1 Pet. 4. 185.* *1 Pet. 4. 186.* *1 Pet. 4. 187.* *1 Pet. 4. 188.* *1 Pet. 4. 189.* *1 Pet. 4. 190.* *1 Pet. 4. 191.* *1 Pet. 4. 192.* *1 Pet. 4. 193.* *1 Pet. 4. 194.* *1 Pet. 4. 195.* *1 Pet. 4. 196.* *1 Pet. 4. 197.* *1 Pet. 4. 198.* *1 Pet. 4. 199.* *1 Pet. 4. 200.* *1 Pet. 4. 201.* *1 Pet. 4. 202.* *1 Pet. 4. 203.* *1 Pet. 4. 204.* *1 Pet. 4. 205.* *1 Pet. 4. 206.* *1 Pet. 4. 207.* *1 Pet. 4. 208.* *1 Pet. 4. 209.* *1 Pet. 4. 210.* *1 Pet. 4. 211.* *1 Pet. 4. 212.* *1 Pet. 4. 213.* *1 Pet. 4. 214.* *1 Pet. 4. 215.* *1 Pet. 4. 216.* *1 Pet. 4. 217.* *1 Pet. 4. 218.* *1 Pet. 4. 219.* *1 Pet. 4. 220.* *1 Pet. 4. 221.* *1 Pet. 4. 222.* *1 Pet. 4. 223.* *1 Pet. 4. 224.* *1 Pet. 4. 225.* *1 Pet. 4. 226.* *1 Pet. 4. 227.* *1 Pet. 4. 228.* *1 Pet. 4. 229.* *1 Pet. 4. 230.* *1 Pet. 4. 231.* *1 Pet. 4. 232.* *1 Pet. 4. 233.* *1 Pet. 4. 234.* *1 Pet. 4. 235.* *1 Pet. 4. 236.* *1 Pet. 4. 237.* *1 Pet. 4. 238.* *1 Pet. 4. 239.* *1 Pet. 4. 240.* *1 Pet. 4. 241.* *1 Pet. 4. 242.* *1 Pet. 4. 243.* *1 Pet. 4. 244.* *1 Pet. 4. 245.* *1 Pet. 4. 246.* *1 Pet. 4. 247.* *1 Pet. 4. 248.* *1 Pet. 4. 249.* *1 Pet. 4. 250.* *1 Pet. 4. 251.* *1 Pet. 4. 252.* *1 Pet. 4. 253.* *1 Pet. 4. 254.* *1 Pet. 4. 255.* *1 Pet. 4. 256.* *1 Pet. 4. 257.* *1 Pet. 4. 258.* *1 Pet. 4. 259.* *1 Pet. 4. 260.* *1 Pet. 4. 261.* *1 Pet. 4. 262.* *1 Pet. 4. 263.* *1 Pet. 4. 264.* *1 Pet. 4. 265.* *1 Pet. 4. 266.* *1 Pet. 4. 267.* *1 Pet. 4. 268.* *1 Pet. 4. 269.* *1 Pet. 4. 270.* *1 Pet. 4. 271.* *1 Pet. 4. 272.* *1 Pet. 4. 273.* *1 Pet. 4. 274.* *1 Pet. 4. 275.* *1 Pet. 4. 276.* *1 Pet. 4. 277.* *1 Pet. 4. 278.* *1 Pet. 4. 279.* *1 Pet. 4. 280.* *1 Pet. 4. 281.* *1 Pet. 4. 282.* *1 Pet. 4. 283.* *1 Pet. 4. 284.* *1 Pet. 4. 285.* *1 Pet. 4. 286.* *1 Pet. 4. 287.* *1 Pet. 4. 288.* *1 Pet. 4. 289.* *1 Pet. 4. 290.* *1 Pet. 4. 291.* *1 Pet. 4. 292.* *1 Pet. 4. 293.* *1 Pet. 4. 294.* *1 Pet. 4. 295.* *1 Pet. 4. 296.* *1 Pet. 4. 297.* *1 Pet. 4. 298.* *1 Pet. 4. 299.* *1 Pet. 4. 300.* *1 Pet. 4. 301.* *1 Pet. 4. 302.* *1 Pet. 4. 303.* *1 Pet. 4. 304.* *1 Pet. 4. 305.* *1 Pet. 4. 306.* *1 Pet. 4. 307.* *1 Pet. 4. 308.* *1 Pet. 4. 309.* *1 Pet. 4. 310.* *1 Pet. 4. 311.* *1 Pet. 4. 312.* *1 Pet. 4. 313.* *1 Pet. 4. 314.* *1 Pet. 4. 315.* *1 Pet. 4. 316.* *1 Pet. 4. 317.* *1 Pet. 4. 318.* *1 Pet. 4. 319.* *1 Pet. 4. 320.* *1 Pet. 4. 321.* *1 Pet. 4. 322.* *1 Pet. 4. 323.* *1 Pet. 4. 324.* *1 Pet. 4. 325.* *1 Pet. 4. 326.* *1 Pet. 4. 327.* *1 Pet. 4. 328.* *1 Pet. 4. 329.* *1 Pet. 4. 330.* *1 Pet. 4. 331.* *1 Pet. 4. 332.* *1 Pet. 4. 333.* *1 Pet. 4. 334.* *1 Pet. 4. 335.* *1 Pet. 4. 336.* *1 Pet. 4. 337.* *1 Pet. 4. 338.* *1 Pet. 4. 339.* *1 Pet. 4. 340.* *1 Pet. 4. 341.* *1 Pet. 4. 342.* *1 Pet. 4. 343.* *1 Pet. 4. 344.* *1 Pet. 4. 345.* *1 Pet. 4. 346.* *1 Pet. 4. 347.* *1 Pet. 4. 348.* *1 Pet. 4. 349.* *1 Pet. 4. 350.* *1 Pet. 4. 351.* *1 Pet. 4. 352.* *1 Pet. 4. 353.* *1 Pet. 4. 354.* *1 Pet. 4. 355.* *1 Pet. 4. 356.* *1 Pet. 4. 357.* *1 Pet. 4. 358.* *1 Pet. 4. 359.* *1 Pet. 4. 360.* *1 Pet. 4. 361.* *1 Pet. 4. 362.* *1 Pet. 4. 363.* *1 Pet. 4. 364.* *1 Pet. 4. 365.* *1 Pet. 4. 366.* *1 Pet. 4. 367.* *1 Pet. 4. 368.* *1 Pet. 4. 369.* *1 Pet. 4. 370.* *1 Pet. 4. 371.* *1 Pet. 4. 372.* *1 Pet. 4. 373.* *1 Pet. 4. 374.* *1 Pet. 4. 375.* *1 Pet. 4. 376.* *1 Pet. 4. 377.* *1 Pet. 4. 378.* *1 Pet. 4. 379.* *1 Pet. 4. 380.* *1 Pet. 4. 381.* *1 Pet. 4. 382.* *1 Pet. 4. 383.* *1 Pet. 4. 384.* *1 Pet. 4. 385.* *1 Pet. 4. 386.* *1 Pet. 4. 387.* *1 Pet. 4. 388.* *1 Pet. 4. 389.* *1 Pet. 4. 390.* *1 Pet. 4. 391.* *1 Pet. 4. 392.* *1 Pet. 4. 393.* *1 Pet. 4. 394.* *1 Pet. 4. 395.* *1 Pet. 4. 396.* *1 Pet. 4. 397.* *1 Pet. 4. 398.* *1 Pet. 4. 399.* *1 Pet. 4. 400.* *1 Pet. 4. 401.* *1 Pet. 4. 402.* *1 Pet. 4. 403.* *1 Pet. 4. 404.* *1 Pet. 4. 405.* *1 Pet. 4. 406.* *1 Pet. 4. 407.* *1 Pet. 4. 408.* *1 Pet. 4. 409.* *1 Pet. 4. 410.* *1 Pet. 4. 411.* *1 Pet. 4. 412.* *1 Pet. 4. 413.* *1 Pet. 4. 414.* *1 Pet. 4. 415.* *1 Pet. 4. 416.* *1 Pet. 4. 417.* *1 Pet. 4. 418.* *1 Pet. 4. 419.* *1 Pet. 4. 420.* *1 Pet. 4. 421.* *1 Pet. 4. 422.* *1 Pet. 4. 423.* *1 Pet. 4. 424.* *1 Pet. 4. 425.* *1 Pet. 4. 426.* *1 Pet. 4. 427.* *1 Pet. 4. 428.* *1 Pet. 4. 429.* *1 Pet. 4. 430.* *1 Pet. 4. 431.* *1 Pet. 4. 432.* *1 Pet. 4. 433.* *1 Pet. 4. 434.* *1 Pet. 4. 435.* *1 Pet. 4. 436.* *1 Pet. 4. 437.* *1 Pet. 4. 438.* *1 Pet. 4. 439.* *1 Pet. 4. 440.* *1 Pet. 4. 441.* *1 Pet. 4. 442.* *1 Pet. 4. 443.* *1 Pet. 4. 444.* *1 Pet. 4. 445.* *1 Pet. 4. 446.* *1 Pet. 4. 447.* *1 Pet. 4. 448.* *1 Pet. 4. 449.* *1 Pet. 4. 450.* *1 Pet. 4. 451.* *1 Pet. 4. 452.* *1 Pet. 4. 453.* *1 Pet. 4. 454.* *1 Pet. 4. 455.* *1 Pet. 4. 456.* *1 Pet. 4. 457.* *1 Pet. 4. 458.* *1 Pet. 4. 459.* *1 Pet. 4. 460.* *1 Pet. 4. 461.* *1 Pet. 4. 462.* *1 Pet. 4. 463.* *1 Pet. 4. 464.* *1 Pet. 4. 465.* *1 Pet. 4. 466.* *1 Pet. 4. 467.* *1 Pet. 4. 468.* *1 Pet. 4. 469.* *1 Pet. 4. 470.* *1 Pet. 4. 471.* *1 Pet. 4. 472.* *1 Pet. 4. 473.* *1 Pet. 4. 474.* *1 Pet. 4. 475.* *1 Pet. 4. 476.* *1 Pet. 4. 477.* *1 Pet. 4. 478.* *1 Pet. 4. 479.* *1 Pet. 4. 480.* *1 Pet. 4. 481.* *1 Pet. 4. 482.* *1 Pet. 4. 483.* *1 Pet. 4. 484.* *1 Pet. 4. 485.* *1 Pet. 4. 486.* *1 Pet. 4. 487.* *1 Pet. 4. 488.* *1 Pet. 4. 489.* *1 Pet. 4. 490.* *1 Pet. 4. 491.* *1 Pet. 4. 492.* *1 Pet. 4. 493.* *1 Pet. 4. 494.* *1 Pet. 4. 495.* *1 Pet. 4. 496.* *1 Pet. 4. 497.* *1 Pet. 4. 498.* *1 Pet. 4. 499.* *1 Pet. 4. 500.* *1 Pet. 4. 501.* *1 Pet. 4. 502.* *1 Pet. 4. 503.* *1 Pet. 4. 504.* *1 Pet. 4. 505.* *1 Pet. 4. 506.* *1 Pet. 4. 507.* *1 Pet. 4. 508.* *1 Pet. 4. 509.* *1 Pet. 4. 510.* *1 Pet. 4. 511.* *1 Pet. 4. 512.* *1 Pet. 4. 513.* *1 Pet. 4. 514.* *1 Pet. 4. 515.* *1 Pet. 4. 516.* *1 Pet. 4. 517.* *1 Pet. 4. 518.* *1 Pet. 4. 519.* *1 Pet. 4. 520.* *1 Pet. 4. 521.* *1 Pet. 4. 522.* *1 Pet. 4. 523.* *1 Pet. 4. 524.* *1 Pet. 4. 525.* *1 Pet. 4. 526.* *1 Pet. 4. 527.* *1 Pet. 4. 528.* *1 Pet. 4. 529.* *1 Pet. 4. 530.* *1 Pet. 4. 531.* *1 Pet. 4. 532.* *1 Pet. 4. 533.* *1 Pet. 4. 534.* *1 Pet. 4. 535.* *1 Pet. 4. 536.* *1 Pet. 4. 537.* *1 Pet. 4. 538.* *1 Pet. 4. 539.* *1 Pet. 4. 540.* *1 Pet. 4. 541.* *1 Pet. 4. 542.* *1 Pet. 4. 543.* *1 Pet. 4. 544.* *1 Pet. 4. 545.* *1 Pet. 4. 546.* *1 Pet. 4. 547.* *1 Pet. 4. 548.* *1 Pet. 4. 549.* *1 Pet. 4. 550.* *1 Pet. 4. 551.* *1 Pet. 4. 552.* *1 Pet. 4. 553.* *1 Pet. 4. 554.* *1 Pet. 4. 555.* *1 Pet. 4. 556.* *1 Pet. 4. 557.* *1 Pet. 4. 558.* *1 Pet. 4. 559.* *1 Pet. 4. 560.* *1 Pet. 4. 561.* *1 Pet. 4. 562.* *1 Pet. 4. 563.* *1 Pet. 4. 564.* *1 Pet. 4. 565.* *1 Pet. 4. 566.* *1 Pet. 4. 567.* *1 Pet. 4. 568.* *1 Pet. 4. 569.* *1 Pet. 4. 570.* *1 Pet. 4. 571.* *1 Pet. 4. 572.* *1 Pet. 4. 573.* *1 Pet. 4. 574.* *1 Pet. 4. 575.* *1 Pet. 4. 576.* *1 Pet. 4. 577.* *1 Pet. 4. 578.* *1 Pet. 4. 579.* *1 Pet. 4. 580.* *1 Pet. 4. 581.* *1 Pet. 4. 582.* *1 Pet. 4. 583.* *1 Pet. 4. 584.* *1 Pet. 4. 585.* *1 Pet. 4. 586.* *1 Pet. 4. 587.* *1 Pet. 4. 588.* *1 Pet. 4. 589.* *1 Pet. 4. 590.* *1 Pet. 4. 591.* *1 Pet. 4. 592.* *1 Pet. 4. 593.* *1 Pet. 4. 594.* *1 Pet. 4. 595.* *1 Pet. 4. 596.* *1 Pet. 4. 597.* *1 Pet. 4. 598.* *1 Pet. 4. 599.* *1 Pet. 4. 600.* *1 Pet. 4. 601.* *1 Pet. 4. 602.* *1 Pet. 4. 603.* *1 Pet. 4. 604.* *1 Pet. 4. 605.* *1 Pet. 4. 606.* *1 Pet. 4. 607.* *1 Pet. 4. 608.* *1 Pet. 4. 609.* *1 Pet. 4. 610.* *1 Pet. 4. 611.* *1 Pet. 4. 612.* *1 Pet. 4. 613.* *1 Pet. 4. 614.* *1 Pet. 4. 615.* *1 Pet. 4. 616.* *1 Pet. 4. 617.* *1 Pet. 4. 618.* *1 Pet. 4. 619.* *1 Pet. 4. 620.* *1 Pet. 4. 621.* *1 Pet. 4. 622.* *1 Pet. 4. 623.* *1 Pet. 4. 624.* *1 Pet. 4. 625.* *1 Pet. 4. 626.* *1 Pet. 4. 627.* *1 Pet. 4. 628.* *1 Pet. 4. 629.* *1 Pet. 4. 630.* *1 Pet. 4. 631.* *1 Pet. 4. 632.* *1 Pet. 4. 633.* *1 Pet. 4. 634.* *1 Pet. 4. 635.* *1 Pet. 4. 636.* *1 Pet. 4. 637.* *1 Pet. 4. 638.* *1 Pet. 4. 639.* *1 Pet. 4. 640.* *1 Pet. 4. 641.* *1 Pet. 4. 642.* *1 Pet. 4. 643.* *1 Pet. 4. 644.* *1 Pet. 4. 645.* *1 Pet. 4. 646.* *1 Pet. 4. 647.* *1 Pet. 4. 648.* *1 Pet. 4. 649.* *1 Pet. 4. 650.* *1 Pet. 4. 651.* *1 Pet. 4. 652.* *1 Pet. 4. 653.* *1 Pet. 4. 654.* *1 Pet. 4. 655.* *1 Pet. 4. 656.* *1 Pet. 4. 657.* *1 Pet. 4. 658.* *1 Pet. 4. 659.* *1 Pet. 4. 660.* *1 Pet. 4. 661.* *1 Pet. 4. 662.* *1 Pet. 4. 663.* *1 Pet. 4. 664.* *1 Pet. 4. 665.* *1 Pet. 4. 666.* *1 Pet. 4. 667.* *1 Pet. 4. 668.* *1 Pet. 4. 669.* *1 Pet. 4. 670.* *1 Pet. 4. 671.* *1 Pet. 4. 672.* *1 Pet. 4. 673.* *1 Pet. 4. 674.* *1 Pet. 4. 675.* *1 Pet. 4. 676.* *1 Pet. 4. 677.* *1 Pet. 4. 678.* *1 Pet. 4. 679.* *1 Pet. 4. 680.* *1 Pet. 4. 681.* *1 Pet. 4. 682.* *1 Pet. 4. 683.* *1 Pet. 4. 684.* *1 Pet. 4. 685.* *1 Pet. 4. 686.* *1 Pet. 4. 687.* *1 Pet. 4. 688.* *1 Pet. 4. 689.* *1 Pet. 4. 690.* *1 Pet. 4. 691.* *1 Pet. 4. 692.* *1 Pet. 4. 693.* *1 Pet. 4. 694.* *1 Pet. 4. 695.* *1 Pet. 4. 696.* *1 Pet. 4. 697.* *1 Pet. 4. 698.* *1 Pet. 4. 699.* *1 Pet. 4. 700.* *1 Pet. 4. 701.* *1 Pet. 4. 702.* *1 Pet. 4. 703.* *1 Pet. 4. 704.* *1 Pet. 4. 705.* *1 Pet. 4. 706.* *1 Pet. 4. 707.* *1 Pet. 4. 708.* *1 Pet. 4. 709.* *1 Pet. 4. 710.* *1 Pet. 4. 711.* *1 Pet. 4. 712.* *1 Pet. 4. 713.* *1 Pet. 4. 714.* *1 Pet. 4. 715.* *1 Pet. 4. 716.* *1 Pet. 4. 717.* *1 Pet. 4. 718.* *1 Pet. 4. 719.* *1 Pet. 4. 720.* *1 Pet. 4. 721.* *1 Pet. 4. 722.* *1 Pet. 4. 723.* *1 Pet. 4. 724.* *1 Pet. 4. 725.* *1 Pet. 4. 726.* *1 Pet. 4. 727.*

that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. 1 Cor. 6. 9. Ephes. 2. 6. Yet you may be converted there is no such fence against your Conversion as of Hypocrites, Matth. 21. 28. The Pharisees and Herodians go into the Kingdom of God before the Pharisees: Therefore hearken to God's Call, Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God and he will abundantly pardon.

Tenthly, Multitudes sleep away the precious Season of Grace in formality and hypocrisy, Luke 16. 15. Ye see they which justify your selves before men, but God knows the hearts, for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God. A meer Form of Religion, wards off all Conviction, and plunges them into the Depths of Hell, Matth. 24. 51. They never discovered their natural Estate and Soul-danger, they never credited God's Threats against secret Sin, but as Matter of meer Moon-shine, and they are hardened by a good Opinion others have of them: Take heed, search your selves, and return to the Lord, lest ye fall out of the grace of God, of which we spoke in Verse 15.

Lastly, There are many who trust to meer Morality and civil Honesty, while in the mean time they entertain rooted Prejudices against Heart-Religion and the Profession thereof, Acts 28. 22. This Sect is every where looked upon, they cannot look on Christ's Yoke as Easy, and can by no Means be reconciled to the Cross, and every Escape in Professions is a Scumbling-block to them, while in the mean time they rest upon their Pretences to Morality, Luke 18. 11, 12. But I pray you notice that these things respect Earth more than Heaven, tends to the Conservation of Order and Peace in this World, but founds no Title to another World: This civilized Nature may be un sanctified still, and without Sanctification there is no Salvation, Hebr. 12. 14. Yea, while you entertain Prejudices at strict Holiness and Heart-Exercise, your Pretences to Morality leads you to neglect Christ: Mistake me not, as if I were pleading the Cause of the Profane, or banishing Morality out of the World, I heartily wish there were more of it even among our selves: But the Eyes of such are so dazzled therewith, as they see no Need of Christ, and this proves the Ruine of their Souls, Luke 18. 11. O what a Saint thinks he himself, when he compares himself with others.

Secondly, I proposed to give some Considerations to prevent this Danger, and to prevail with you to go in with the present Season of Grace, that so ye may not shew the Birth-right grasping at the Adverser of Bread: And this by way of Improvement of this Doctrine. Consider then, 1. Will ye not do as much for your Souls as ye see others do for the World? How do they watch Opportunities to gain an Estate? Is not saving a Man's Soul as weighty a Concern as to get an Estate? 2. How uncertain is the Season of Grace? How speedily and irresistibly does it slide away? Should not this awaken you to Day to hear his Voice to improve these Seasons? For if once lost, they can never be recovered, as you heard from the former Doctrine. 3. If ye go in with the Season it will presently facilitate the Work of your Salvation, an Impression is easily made on Wax when melted, but stay till it be hardened, tho' you lay the greatest Weight on the Seal, it leaves not its Impression on it: So is it with the Heart, if the present Season of Grace be neglected, it becomes hardened through the deceitfulness of Sin, Hebr. 3. 13, 15. 4. Consider the Importance and Weight of your Soul's Salvation, it is no ordinary Concern, it is your Life, yes, your Eternal Life: The Solemnity and Awfulness of such a Business as this, is enough to swallow up the Spirit of a Man, Life and Estate to be at a Venture on the Cast of a Dice is very weighty, but it is meer Moon-shine to

Salvation Work. 4. If ye value the true Pleasure of Life, or solid Comfort of your Soul at Death, O neglect not the Season of Grace, take away the former two, and you lay a Man lower than the beasts that perish. 6. Consider your time is short, Death and Eternity are at the Door, willing or unwilling, ready or not ready, you must be gone when Death comes for you, there is no Discharge in that Warfare. Therefore awake and be persuaded in this your Day, to know the things that belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes, behold he yet stands at the door and knocks, — Think what a Mercy is it your Lot is cast under the Gospel, God has not dealt with you as with other Nations? — What a Mercy is it ye have your Lives lengthned out under the Gospel, thousands of such as have been Co-temporary with you are snatched away, they shall never hear another Call, God's Treaty with them is at an End. — What an Aggravation of your Misery will it be to sink down to Hell with Calls of Mercy sounding in your Ears? *Matth. 11. 23.* Do not think God will hear your Cries in time of Misery, who neglect and slight his Calls in time of Mercy, *Prov. 1. 24, 25.* Yea, you know not but the present Call you are getting may be the last ever God intends to give. After this your Heart may be judicially sealed up and hardened, *Isa. 6. 10.* Hearken not therefore to Satan who calls you to enjoy the World, to follow your Lusts and sinful Pleasures; But hearken and obey Christ's Call, who commands you to abandon your Lusts, to dedicate your selves to his Service, and to embrace himself for Righteousness and Salvation, and so doing according to his Promise, ye shall obtain Grace here, and Glory hereafter. I proceed to

Observe 7th, and last from this Text, viz. *That Sin may be the Occasion of much Sorrow, when there is no Sorrow for Sin*: Men may Repent that in the Consequences, which they Love in the Causes.

To prepare this for your Use, I shall First, Prove the Doctrine. Secondly, Shew what kind of Sorrow is occasioned by Sin. Thirdly, What is that true Sorrow for Sin that is amissing with many to whom Sin has occasioned Sorrow.

First, That Sin may occasion much Sorrow, when there is nothing of the Exercise of godly Sorrow acceptable to God, is evident, 1. Because we find all Sorts of Affections acted and vented by such as have been only Temporary Believers, *Matth. 13. 20.* He that receives the Seed into stony places, the same is he who heareth the word and anon with joy receiveth it. Now, if the Affection of Joy be moved by a meer Temporary Faith, why not that of Sorrow too? When Moses told the Israelites of the Anger of the Lord against them for Muzzling, they mourned greatly, *Numb. 14. 39.* yet they had not that godly Sorrow that is well pleasing to God. 2. Tho' the Objects about which these Affections are moved may be Spiritual, yet the Motives and Principles which set them on Work, are but Carnal and Natural. 3. These Motions and Affections are rather a sudden Fit than the very Frame and Temper of the Soul, they are but like the morning cloud and early dew that goes away, *Hosea 6. 4.* Like Summer Frost, when the Sun ariseth, it evaporateth.

Secondly, I proposed to shew, what kind of Sorrow is occasioned by Sin? And indeed it is the Rise and Cause of all Trials, Troubles and Sorrows in the World, this drowned the old World in Water, destroyed Sodom with Fire, and laid Jerusalem on Heaps. Sin occasions, 1. National Sorrows, as Wars, *Judges 5. 8.* James 4. 1. Famine, *A fruitful land is turned to barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, Psal. 107. 34.* It brings Cleanse of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places, *Amos 4. 6.* and Pestilence, to consume a people off the land, *Deut. 28. 21.* 2. Sin occasions Personal Sorrows and Troubles, Temporal on the Body, Pains, Sickness, Diseases; Spiritual upon

Hebrews XII. Verse 17.

upon the Soul, as Blindness of Mind, Hardness of Heart, Searedness of Conscience, Motions of Corruption, and eternal Woes. It was the first Founder of Hell, it laid the Corner-stone of that dark Vault, for before Sin there was no Hell. ²³ Ask the People of God, and they will tell you what sorrows Sin brings with it, many a sorrowful Day it breeds them, see *Psal.* 38. 51. Many a Trial *Paul* came through, but none of them went so nigh his Heart as Sin, *Rom.* 7. 24. they will choose any Suffering rather than Sin, *Daniel* was content to be thrown into the Lions Den, the three Children into the Fire, *Paul* and *Silas* into the Stocks to avoid sinning.

Thirdly, I am to tell you what is that true Sorrow, these real Tears for Sin that evince sincere Repentance; these Tears, with which if thou seek, thou shalt not be denied the Birth-right. And 1. They are Soul-affecting Tears, flowing from deep Apprehensions of the Nature, Desert and Filthiness of Sin, affronting God, and crucifying Christ afresh; *Esau* may cry with *Pharaoh*, *I have sinned*, or cry out in strait, *Lord have Mercy on me*, may hang their Head as a Balustrade, or roar on a present Rack of Trouble, but never have deep serious Thoughts of Sin as Sin. ²⁴ It is universal, he sorrows and tears for all Sin, not only his own, but the Sins of others. Let us grieve for *Sodom*, *David* says, *Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes*, because the wicked keep not thy Law, *Psal.* 119. 136. ³⁵ It is a Sorrow for Sin, not for Trouble caused by it, Sorrow is like what Astronomers say of *Mercurie's* Influence, *Good* if joined with a good, and *Bad* if joined with a bad Planet; it was good in *Peter*, nought in *Judas*; good in *David*, but not in *Achab*. ⁴⁵ It is a proportioned Sorrow, to the Measure, great Sins must have great Sorrow, as *Peter's*, *Mnasseh's*, and *Mary Magdalene's*; and to the Merit of Sin, as the Wicked, if they Lived for ever, would Sin for ever; so the Believer would Sorrow for ever; *Hezekiah* resolved, *I shall go softly all my Tears in the bitterness of my Soul*, *Isa.* 38. 15. when Expressions of Sorrow cease, yet there be Affections of Sorrow within. ⁵⁵ It grows on a Root of Faith, *Zech.* 12. 10. not on a legal Faith, that is too low, but on an evangelical Faith, and yet not the Faith of Assurance, this is too high, there may be godly Sorrow where this is not; but by this Faith a Soul is persuaded of the sufficiency of God's Mercy and Christ's Merits for the pardoning of Sin, of the Freeness and Willingness of God to pardon it, and therefore the Soul embraces and depends upon the Mercy of God, offered through the Merits of Christ in the Gospel for Pardon and Forgiveness. ⁶⁵ This godly Sorrow is the Sorrow of a Son final and kindly, not of a Slave which rises from Fear, but of a Son which flows from Love, when the Man sits down and takes a View what God might have done with him, and yet how merciful he has been, this melts and dissolves the Soul into Sorrow. *Ezek.* 36. 30, 31. who can read over that Place without Tears, *Isa.* 43. 24, 25. *Thou hast bought me no sweet Cana with Money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy Sacrifice; but thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins, thou hast wearied me with thine Iniquities*. What follows? *Wrath and Vengeance*? No, Floods of Mercy flowing down, *Ver.* 25. *I, even I am he that blotter out thy Transgressions for mine own Name sake*. *Isa.* 57. 17. *For the Iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on proudly in the way of his Heart*. *Ver.* 18. *I have seen his ways, and I will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore Comforts unto him, and to his Mourners*. These Discoveries of God's Love begets Love to him in the Souls of his People, which makes their Eyes flow down with Tears, to think they should offend so gracious a God, *Zech.* 12. 10. *Psal.* 51. 4. From this Doctrine take

One Life of Exhortation, *Adm. Sin bring People to much Sorrow, and yet they have no Sorrow for Sin, but such as will not prevail to obtain the Blessing.* Then I exhort you, ye would not *like* come first of the Amb-*right* and Blessing, endeavour for a sound and honest Heart, and for your own Comfort endeavour to clear up to your own Souls that it is so.

First, Endeavour a sound and honest Heart, *else* tho' ye would weep a Sea of Tears ye will never come at the *Birth-right*. I speak this even to you who go the Round of Duties, look to your Hearts, beware of bale, Buds and Arms, for great are the Advantages of Heart-honesty. *First*, It is a Value and Price on the meanest Action before God, Milk as well as Honey, Song 3. 1. & 5. 1. a Crown, or a Tear with this will be accepted, *King 13. 14.* tho' there were many things wrong with *Ab.* yet *his Heart was right with the LORD all his Days.* Heart-honesty distinguishes our Words and Persons from these of others in that Day, when Christ shall come to separate the *Prisoners* and the *Pile*. *Secondly*, But if this be wanting, all you do is lost, if God in End have you to meet with that Regret, *They lied to him with their Tongues, for their Heart was not right with him.* *Psal. 78. 36. 37.* *Thirdly*, This is the chief thing God desires in Man, this he reckons as Perfection, as with *Job*, *Fourthly*, This will give you Comfort in saddest Times, whether as to Body or Soul, *Psal. 112. 4. To the Upright there ariseth Light in Darkness.* *Fifthly*, Honesty will be a Guard to the Heart against Apostasy, to secure you from *Evils* End.

If you ask, *How shall I get this Heart-honesty?* For Answer, I will tell you, *First*, It is Difficult and Painful. *Secondly*, I shall give some Means in order to attaining it.

For the *First*, It is difficult to cure an unsound Heart, it is a Cure rarely wrought, we heard of a bloody and idolatrous *Adonias*, an unclean *Adey*, an oppressing Publicane, a persecuting *Paul*, and many notorious Sinners converted: But where read we of the Return of a *Tudas* or *Simon Magus*, rare are the Instances of smooth Hypocrites made real Converts; it is true, infinite Grace knows no Difference, yet as to our discerning it is more rare and difficult, for it is hard to convince such that they need a Cure, *Rev. 3. 17.* A profane Man has no such Screen to ward off Convictions as the Hypocrite. It is hard also to humble them, let Ministers denounce never so many Threatnings against Sinners, but, by they, these concern not us, and this adds acquired to natural Hardness. And it is most difficult to reclaim them, the Devil has got greater Power in them than in others, the Forts of Sin and Satan are more strengthened in them, and the Means of reclaiming less efficacious, he is able to sit out Sermons and Duties without any manner of working on his Saint, that which moves others moves not him, he is Prayer-proof and Sermon-proof.

As it is Difficult, so it is Painful to cure and convert an unsound Heart, it will cost many Grips and Griefs, Prayers and Tears before it be wrought, thou must undo all thou hast done, come back all the way thou hast gone, and go on another way, if ever thou wouldst come to Heaven. It is painful in respect of Medicines to be applied, hard Physick, humbling, lancing, cutting, dismemb'ring, plucking out right Eyes, and cutting off right Hands. — Painful in respect of the Disorders wherewith these Medicines are to encounter; what Gashes, Bubbles, Wounds, running Issues, and bloody Sores, what paining Sorrows and Griefs must ye endure in the Cure of these.

Having

Having discovered the Difficulty of curing an unsound Heart, I shall next direct you to for about the Cure thereof in the use of these Means, 1. Labour to be convinced of the Danger of Heart-unsoundness, that it makes thy Person and Performances odious to a holy God, *Isa. 2. 19. For ye shall say, we have, they are a truth as we have many of them.* O fearful to stand under the Hatred of the great God of Heaven and Earth, who threatens the unfaithful Servant, *He shall be ashamed and appoint him his portion with hypocrites, there shall he weep and gnashing of teeth.* *Matth. 24. 10. 11.* Thou shalt be called like the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. O the Hell of Hypocrites and Sinners! every Duty, Sacrament, or Prayer, are a new Bundle to make the Fire hotter. 2. Consider and believe that there is a God. Atheism is the Seed of Hypocrisy, no Man more so wicked, than an Hypocrite is; the very Belief that there is a God, would strike down base Ends in serving him; And thou believe God to be All-seeing and Heart-searching, thou could not dealable with him, before whom thou lies open, and no to the Black Stone, anatomized, thy Inwards all laid, as the word *νεκροψαυειν*, *Hebr. 4. 13.* signifies. This thought brought home by serious Consideration, would half work the Cure. 3. Thou must be new made, the way to mend thee is to Unmake thee, thou must be all undone, taken in Pieces and made up again before thou can be better, piecing and patching will not serve the turn, thy Judgment, Will, Heart and Affections must all be made new. 4. Be scrupulous in Prayer, cry to God with David, *Let my heart be found to thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.* *Psal. 119. 80.* That all thou doest may rise from right Principles, be directed by a right Rule to a right End.

And having got thy Heart sound, fence and guard it against Hypocrisy, before ye go on any Duty set out aright in the Strength and Grace of Christ. When at Duty suffer no base Ends to steal in to poison all thou doest, but do Duty as if there were no Hopes, no Fears, no Rewards in the World; And when Duty is over, if God has quickened, enlarged, inflamed and humbled thy Heart, give him all the Glory, and lie thou very low.

The second Branch of this Exhortation, is, Having got an honest Heart for your more comfortable Being, endeavour to clear up to your own Souls that is is for without this ye can neither live nor die with Comfort. For your gaining this, I shall give the following Directions, 1. Make a thorough and impartial Scrutiny. Examine be low not discerned without diligent Search, not only into the Actions, but into the Heart and Affections. Hypocrisy is a Sin rooted in the Heart, *Jer. 17. 9.* It was a fair Speech, *Deut. 5. 27.* All that the Lord God will speak we will hear and do it. But God saw a false Heart below this fair Profession, *verse 29.* 2. Acquaint your selves with the most sure and clearing Evidences of Heart-honesty, and try your Hearts by them. May be thou bears the Word with Joy, thou bewails Sin with Tears, thou avoids gross Sins with Care, and thou opposes common Corruptions with Zeal. All these are comfortable Signs, but not infallible Evidences of real Grace, for there is nothing in them but what foul *Judas* and *Herod* had. Therefore take these Marks that are certain and will not deceive you, of which I give two Properties, 1. They are such as the Word of God does countenance, if not so, they are but Presumptions of your own Hearts, and will never give Comfort in Life or Death, it is this Book must cast us or clear us at the last Day. 2. They are Incompatible with any whose Hearts are not Honest and Reciprocal, agreeing to all, and only such who are Honest.

If you ask, What are these Evidences? *Answer*, They are taken either, 1. From the Disposition of a true Mourner, a sincere Believer mourns for all Sin, for Sin as Sin, and not only as clothed with Wrath, for Sin as it deprives of the Presence of Christ in Ordinances, for the Sins of others, and for the Want of the Growth of Grace in himself: Now, this a mere Hypocrite can never do: Therefore, if on Search thou find God has given thee a Heart to do these things, thou may conclude thy Sincerity, and thou shalt not come short of the *Birch-right and Blessing*. Or certain Marks of Grace may be taken, 2. From the Desires of the Soul, a Hypocrite cannot desire the Death of all Sin, nor the Growth of all Grace at all times, but only at Sickness, at Death, and in good Company he desires to be like a Saint; But if thou thirst for all Grace, and at all times, then may thou conclude thy Sincerity. 3. Such Marks of Grace may be had from your Disposition and Frame in and about holy Duties, a sincere Soul is Universal in them, *Psalm 119:66. Acts 24:16, 17, 18.* He is Constant in them, *Job 2:4.* He is Straight in them, looking not to himself, but to God's Command, and desiring his Glory, *2 Cor. 1:12. Ch. 5:14.* He is Spiritual in them, *Rom. 1:9. 1 Cor. 14:15.* And he is Humble in them, giving all the Glory to God, *1 Chron. 29:13, 14.* Now therefore our God, we thank and praise thy glorious Name, *Psalm 119:104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119.* and what is my people, that we should be able to offer (so willingly) after this sort: for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

To Conclude, These Evidences, if you have them, will set you beyond Hypocrites and weeping *Esaus*, and secure the *Birch-right and Blessing* to you: At First, An honest Heart is a new Heart, *Ezek. 11:19.* It was formerly divided among the Creatures, now it is gathered to God; it has but one Design now, and that is to approve it self to God: Secondly, The honest Soul is Progressive, not content with any Measure of Grace already attained, but pressing for more, *Phil. 3:13.* never at his Journey's End till he get to Heaven: Thirdly, He strives most for inward Reformation of Heart, *Acts 15:9.* to keep up a fearing, believing, watching and loving Frame of Soul: Fourthly, He delights to be made purely nothing in his own Eyes and in the Eyes of others; he takes Pleasure in God's humbling him: Fifthly, When dearest Enjoyments are striken, this drives him nearer to God, to possess these Vacancies; He longs for Union with him, as the Ground of all his Comforts.

Now, search and try for these Evidences, and pray for the Spirit of God to enlighten your Eyes to see the Transcript of them in your Souls: And if you find them, do not peevishly refuse Comfort when it is offered on Scripture Grounds, but conclude, since God has given me these Evidences of his Grace, I hope I am no Hypocrite, nor weeping *Esau*, but shall through his Grace inherit the Blessing.

HE-
giving to all, and only such who are honest

HEBREWS XII. Verses 18. 19, 20, 21.

Verf. 18. *For ye are not come unto the Mount that might be touched, and that burned with Fire, nor unto Blackness, and Darkness, and Tempest,*

Verf. 19. *And the sound of a Trumpet, and the voice of Words, which voice they that heard, intreated that the Word should not be spoken to them any more :*

Verf. 20. *(For they could not endure that which was commanded; And if so much as a Beast touch the Mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a Dart,*

Verf. 21. *And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.)*

BEFORE I go into the particular Division and Explication of these Verses now read, I shall premise some general *Advertisements*, to clear the Scope of the Text, and of what follows to the End of the Chapter. First then, We may notice the great Design of the Apostle in this Epistle is to persuade the *Hebrews* to Constancy and Perseverance in the Profession of the Gospel, wherein at present they seemed greatly shaken. 2ly, The great Argument he insists on, is the Excellency, Glory and Advantage of that Gospel State whereto they were called, which he has proven from the Person and Office of its Author, his Priesthood and Sacrifice ; All the Ordinances and Institutions of the Law being only P^refigurations of Christ the great *Antitype* to be discovered in the Gospel. 3ly, Having insisted at length on these, he in this Text does summarily resume the whole, making a brief Scheme of the two States before compared, ballances the one against the other, and thereby demonstrates the Force of his Exhortation to Perseverance. 4ly, The great Honour and Privilege of the *Judaical Church State*, whereon all their particular Advantages did depend, was their coming to, and appearing at Mount Sinai at giving of the Law ; there were they taken into Covenant with God, to be his peculiar People above all the World, there were they formed into a National Church, there had they all the Privileges of Divine Worship committed to them ; there they got a Title to all these Privileges named, *Rom. 9. 4.* the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenant, and the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises, of these they boast to this Day. 5ly, Yet in all the Discoveries of God at Mount Sinai there was no evidence of God's being reconciled, he was only represented as an absolute and severe Judge ; no Intimation of Ease and Pardon in case of Transgression, no Promise of assisting Grace to perform Duties required, it was nothing

nothing like the Ministration of the Gospel, but only a Ministration of the Glory of God obliging Sinners to subscribe their Condemnation as just and equal. 6ly, Hence it is evident, that *Israel* at Mount Sinai did personate the Case of convinced Sinners under the Sentence of the Law, not yet relieved by the Gospel.

These things being premised, I come to the particular Explication of the Text, where the Apostle's chief Aim is to set off the Excellency and Glory of that State of the Gospel Church, to which the *Hebrews* are now called and entred, which he expresses, 1. *Negatively*, in the Verses read, that it was not like the Church State under the old Testament, nor like the way of the Peoples Entry to it. 2. *Positively*, shewing the State to which they were called by the Gospel, is inexpressibly more Excellent in it self, and Beneficial to them, Verse 22. — 25.

In the Words read, we have, 1. A Supposition, *That the Israelites came to the Mount that might be touched, that burned with Fire, &c.* 2. A Pollution, *That this Dispensation of the Law given to the Israelites was very terrible, not like these Privileges we enjoy under the Gospel.*

First, The Supposition, *they came*, included in this, *You are not come*, comprehends the holy Preparation the *Israelites* used before their Approach to God in so solemn a Manner, *They sanctified themselves, and washed their Clothes*, *Exod. 19. 10, 11.* Whence it follows that the Gospel Church being more Excellent than that of the Old Testament, we ought to endeavour a more eminent Sanctification and Preparation in all our Approaches to God therein; to which the Apostle also exhorts, *Verse 28. Let us have Grace whereby we may serve him acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear.* The Appearances of God were the Glory of the Old Testament, the great Security of the Faith of Believers, and the most eminent Privilege of the Church; yet they were but dark Resemblances of what was granted in the Foundation of the Gospel State, *God manifest in the Flesh*, *1 Tim. 3. 16. The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us*, *John 1. 14.*

Secondly, *That this Dispensation of the Law given to the Israelites was very terrible*, appears, 1. From the terrible Signs which appeared at the giving of the Law. 2. By the fearful Effects both upon Men and Beasts. There are several amazing Signs appeared at giving of the Law, recorded in the Text, *A Mount touched, Burning with Fire, Blackness and Darkness, Tempest, Sound of Trumpets, Voice of Words.*

The first of these Signs is, *they came to the Mount that might be touched*; this Mount was Sinai in the Wilderness of *Parah*, in the Desert of *Arabia*, *Gal. 4. 25.* This is mentioned in the first place, because with respect to this Mount, all the Laws and Directions of the Peoples Approach were given, *Exodus Chap. 19.* This Mount might be touched, felt or handled, that is, it was a carnal sensible thing, exposed to external Senses, and to the most earthly of them feeling; which appears from the Prohibition not to touch it, for unless it could have been touched naturally, none could have been morally prohibit to touch it. And this he mentions, 1. To shew how inferior the giving of the Law was, to the preaching of the Gospel, which was from Heaven, *Vers. 25.* but this Mount might be touched by Men, yea or by Beasts. 2. To tell the Bondage and Fear the People were in, who might not so much as touch the Mount, where there were Signs of God's Presence, tho' in it self exposed to the Sense of any Creature. Much of Divine Wisdom appears in choosing of this Place for giving the Law, it was an absolute Solitude, a Place remote from Habitation and Converse of Men; here the People could neither hear nor see any thing but God and themselves; there was no Appearance of any Retreat nor Relief; but there they must abide the Will of God. Solitude is profitable

profitable for secret Converse with God, and when God deals with Men by the Law, he will let them see nothing but himself and their own Consciences; of which more when we come to Doctrines from this Text. This Mount was also a barren, fruitless Place, the Law in a State of Sin brings forth no Fruit acceptable to God, or useful to the Souls of Men: This Place is now absolutely desolate and forsaken, and these who will abide under the Law, and not come to Christ, shall be forsaken of God, and left to Desolation and Horror.

The second Sign, *that burned with Fire*; this was a distinct Token of God's Presence, and a Mean of filling the People with Dread, Terror and Fear, *Exod. 19. 18. Deut. 4. 11, 12.* God is oft represented by Fire in Scripture, *Deut. 4. 24. Isa. 30. 33.* to signify his Severity in executing his Judgments, *Ija. 66. 15.* The Light, Purity and Holiness of his Nature, his Jealousie which breaks out against Sin, the inexorable Efficacy of his Law to destroy its Transgressors, *Deut. 33. 2.* and the Terror of his Majesty as the great Legislator. Hence we may learn, that when Men under an Arrest by the Law, having to deal with God, immediately their first Discoveries of him are his Holiness and Severity against Sin and Sinners, breathing out his Anger and Displeasure; there the Law leaves them to be devoured, without Relief from Jesus Christ: These are Mysteries hid from Sinners, until they be brought to the Law, or the Law to them, till the Law come they are alive, that is, at Peace and Security, well satisfied with their Condition, see no Fire ready to consume them, yea they have quite other Notions of God, *Psal. 50. 21.* but when the Law comes, they see the Anger of God burning like Fire against them for their Sin.

The third Sign of Terror in dispensing of the Law mentioned in the Text, is, *Blackness and Darkness*: It may be asked, How can Fire which is Light, consist with *Blackness and Darkness*? Answer, Some distinguish Times, others different Places of the Mountain; but it is evident they were mingled together, *Deut. 5. 22, 23, 24. Chap. 4. 11, 12. Psal. 18. 8. — 13.* And nothing can be conceived of greater Dread and Terror than such a Mixture of *Fire and Darkness*, which left nothing to the Fire of useful Light, but only Dread and Terror, filling the People with Perplexity. This is to signify, that while Sinners are shut up under Guilt, they desire to see some Relief; but instead thereof while under the Law, all things are covered with Blackness and Obscurity, which can only be removed by the Gospel, and the Ministry of Christ.

The fourth Sign of Terror in dispensing the Law, is *Tempest*, meaning the *Thunderings, Lightnings and Earthquakes*, which were on the Mount, *Exod. 19. 16. Chap. 20. 18.* these increased the Terror of Darkness, making it a thick Darkness. To shew, as it was without at the giving of the Law, so the Work of the Law within fills the Minds of Men with a mighty perplexing Storm; the Soul knows not what to do for Relief, the Thoughts are disquieted, for any thing the Law know, the Soul must die and perish, but Christ steps in with an Offer of Mercy, crying, *Behold me, behold me.*

The fifth Sign at giving of the Law, was the *Sound of a Trumpet*, *Vers. 19.* This was not a real Trumpet, but formed in the Air by the Ministry of Angels, to a Degree of Terror, which waxed louder and louder, to signify the nearer Approach of God. The Trumpet was of great Use in sacred Things, there was a Memorial of *blowing Trumpets on the first Day of the seventh Month, to call the People to a solemn Day of Expiation*, *Lev. 23. 24.* which was a Type of preaching of the Gospel, and a Declaration of the Remission of Sins by the Attonement made in the Sacrifice of Christ. But the principal Use of them was in the Proclamation of the *Jubilee every fifty Years*, *Lev. 25. 9.* which

is fulfilled in the Ministry of Christ, *Ish. 61. 1, 2.* At the giving of the Law this Trumpet was blown to intimate the Approach of God, and prepare the Hearts of People with a due Reverence of him, and to summon them to appear before him as their Law-giver and Judge, and it did typify that all Flesh shall be summoned before God's Tribunal at the Judgment of the great Day, and as it was afterward used in the Feast of Expiation and Year of Jubilee, it does typify the Promulgation of the Gospel by the Ministry of Christ. From the whole we may learn, 1. *That when God calls Sinners to answer the Law, there is no way to avoid an Appearance.* 2. *That it is a sweet Change to be carried from the Bench and Bar of the Law to the Throne of Grace in the Gospel, to accept Pardon from Christ.*

Sixthly, At giving of the Law there was a *Voice of Words*; God spake the Words of the Ten Commands by an articulate Voice, to be understood by all the People, *Exod. 19. 19.* Chap. 20. 19. *Deut. 4. 12.* Chap. 5. 22, 23. This Voice was so great and terrible from the midst of the dreadful Fire, Clouds and Darkness, that the People were not able to bear it. The *Moral Law* for the Substance of it was written in the Heart of Man at his first Creation, but being defaced by Sin, God gave it in the Church this becoming Renovation with Majesty and Terror, to declare its everlasting Establishment in the Church, that no Change shall be made in its Commands or Penalties, but all must be fulfilled, or Sinners can have no Acceptance with God. God communicated the *Ceremonial and Judicial Law* by Revelation to *Moses*; but these ten Words of the *Moral Law*, and these only he spake with a terrible Voice to all the People, and wrote them with his own Finger on Tables of Stone.

Next, in the Words read we have the Effect of this terrible Dispensation of the Law, both upon Man and Beasts. As to the latter, the Interdict was express, even as to Beasts, if they touched the Mount, *Exod. 19. 12, 13.* — *Thou shalt set Bounds to the People round about: — Whosoever toucheth the Mount, shall surely be put to Death. There shall no Hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or Man, it shall not live.* I doubt not but Divine Providence removed from the Mount such Beasts as were not under the Power of Man, as the wild Beasts, but the Prohibition respects the Peoples Cattel which were under their Power, and at their Disposal: Which seems to intimate the absolute Inaccessibleness of God in and by the Law, and the Uncleanliness of all things Sinners possess by their Relation to them, *To the impure all things are impure.* The manner of the Death is, *They shall be stoned, or shot through with a Dart*, intimating the Hainousness of the Offence, and at what Distance ought we to keep our selves from every thing that falls under the Curse of God's Law.

The Effects of this dreadful dispensing of the Law upon Men, are expressed, 1. Upon upon the People. 2. Upon *Moses*. First, *The People intreated the Word should not be spoken to them any more*, the Word *נאמנו*, signifies, *They desired to have themselves excused*, they intreated it as a Favour, that God might not speak to them any more by such an immediate terrible Voice, but by his Servant *Moses*, *Deut. 5. 25, — 29.* and because they did this out of a Reverence of the Majesty of God, without any Design of declining Obedience, it was accepted. The Law overwhelms a Sinner, but we must look to the Mediator for Safety.

Secondly, This dispensing of the Law had such Effect on *Moses*, who was a holy Person, accustomed to Divine Revelations, and the Messenger betwixt God and the People at that time, that he said, *I exceedingly fear and quake*, *Verf. 21.* what he saw and heard was terrible to him; this Expression of *Moses's* Fear is to be had in no other Place:

Place of Scripture but in the Text: Yet it gives no Ground for the Papists unwritten Traditions, for how know they but the Apostle who penned this Epistle had this from some authentick Record extant in his time, or by immediate Revelation; and if these Words were not here recorded, what had become of the Tradition? When Moses was thus terrified, God gave him Relief and Comfort by a Voice, *Exod. 19. 19.* and therefore he was able to Comfort the People, *Exod. 20. 20.* When we are terrified by the Law, we must look to him for Comfort, who is the End of the Law for Righteousness to all who believe.

The Text being thus divided and explained, we may from it take these general Observations.

Observe 1. That it is of the greatest Concern to any People to be duly prepared for solemn approaching the great God. The Israelites before they came to Mount Sinai, sanctified themselves, and washed their Clothes, *Exod. 19. 10, 11.* and this is supposed in the Text as already explained.

Observe 2. Solitude and Retirement is a great Advantage in the more immediate secret Service and Worship of God. Mount Sinai where God thus manifested himself was a most retired Place.

Observe 3. The Dispensation of the Law and Covenant under which Believers lived in the Old Testament, was Earthly, Dark, and full of Terror. This is signified by the Advant that might be touched, the Blackness, Darkness and Tempest, that made even Moses say, *Exceedingly fear.*

Observe 4. When God deals with Men by the Law, he will let them see nothing but himself and their own Consciences, he takes them out of their Reliefs, Reserves and Retreats whereby they use to shield themselves from its Efficacy. A Sinner thoroughly convinced, can find no Relief but by the Blood of Christ.

Observe 5. That when Souls are laid under an Arrest by the Convictions, Charges and Challenges of God's holy Law, the Spirit of God usually fills them with Dread, Fear and Terror. Moses and the People were terrified at giving of the Law, and all the Particulars in the Text serve to set out this Terror, the Agony of Conscience convinced by the Law of God is very great, such a wounded Spirit who can bear? This Fire, Blackness and Darkness who can endure? Yet a real Convert shall pass through it in lesser or greater Degree.

I return to Observe 1. That it is of the greatest Concern to any People to be duly prepared, for solemn approaching the great God. The Israelites before they came to Mount Sinai, sanctified themselves, which is supposed in the Text; how much more are we under the Gospel obliged to approach to God with Reverence and holy Fear, *Heb. 12. 28.*

In Prosecution of this Point, I shall, 1. Shew what this Preparation is. 2. Give Directions how to attain it. 3. Motives to press it.

To begin with the first, There is a twofold Preparation to acceptable approaching the great God, *Habitual*, and *Actual*. *Habitual Preparation* consists in the Souls being in a gracious Estate, translated from Nature to Grace by the Spirit of God, having passed the Pangs of the new Birth. Conviction has discovered the Mystery of Sin, has set it home on the Soul with a *Thou art the Man*, thou has offended the Majesty of God, and ruined thy own Soul. Then the Man acknowledges Guilt, saying, *I have sinned, what shall I do to thee, O thou preserver of Men, what shall I do to be saved?* And the Gospel Remedy Jesus Christ being discovered, he flies to him for Salvation, crying, *What have I any more to do with Idols, I will nail mine Ears to the Posts of my Saviour's Door, for his*
Servant

Servant will I be for ever. Till this be done, the Soul can never be in a prepared Case for approaching the great God.

Actual Preparation for acceptable approaching a holy God, consists in a *lively up-taking of God, our Selves, and our Duties*. First, If you would approach to God in the right Manner, you must have holy Conceptions of his Majesty; As 1. You must firmly believe and be persuaded, *That he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. 11. 6. 2. You must have lively Impressions of his glorious Perfections, endeavouring by Faith to travel through them, with Admiration, Reverence and Praise; Think of his Infinitude, as Immenſe and Incomprehenſible, filling Heaven and Earth, elegantly diſcribed, *Pſal. 139*. Think of his glorious Eternity, *From everlaſting to everlaſting he is God*, without Beginning or Ending; Of his unchangeable Nature, *He is the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableneſs nor ſhadow of turning*; Of his omnipotent Power for Protection of his People, and Deſtruction of his Enemies; Of his unſearchable Wiſdom, who cannot miſtake his Meaſures; Of his glorious Holineſs, *He is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*; Of his ſpotleſs Juſtice, which by no means will clear the guilty; Of his admirable Goodneſs and Clemency, eaſie to be Intreated; And of his perfect Faithfulneſs, *keeping Covenant for ever*, having ſealed it by his Oath to the Heirs of Salvation. 3. You muſt ſecure a Claim to God as your God by Covenant, which affords holy, humble Confidence in approaching him in a Mediator, without whom he is a *conſuming fire*; if ye cannot attain Faith of *Aſſurance*, at leaſt you muſt have Faith of *Adherence*, without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God. 2ly, This Preparation is Converſant about your ſelves; Take a back-look of your way in the Valley while ſtanding without God, Strangers and Enemies to him; What a Wonder is it that the Earth has not opened and ſwallowed thee up! Look to your remarkable Deliverance, when the kind Samaritan paſſed by and caſt the Mantle of his Love over you, this may warm your Hearts with Love, in all your Approaches to God. Look how many Laps and Slips you have ſince been guilty of, which may ſend you fraughted with ſin to the Fountain for Pardon and Purification: And look to your inward Frame, ſaſt your Approaches to God, which muſt be attended with theſe Ingredients: It muſt be believing, acting Faith on the Merits and Mediation of Chriſt, and pleading the Promiſes; It muſt be a loving Frame, *For God is Love, and he that dwells in God, dwells in Love*, this is the Cement betwixt God and the Soul in Duty; It muſt be a watching Frame, ay aloft guarding againſt what may creep in to indiſpoſe and marr Accels to God; It muſt be a lively Frame, the Graces drawn out to Exerciſe, the Spices flowing out and giving a goodly Smell: And your Frame ſhould be attended with holy Fear, *leſt a Promiſe being leſt of entering into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it*, Heb. 4. 1. This is to rub up Diligence in ſpiritual Duties, *Working out your Salvation with fear and trembling*. 3ly, This Preparation takes in your right up-taking the Duties in which you approach God, which are either more remote and mediate, as Hearing, Reading, Meditation, and ſpiritual Conference; Or more near and immediate, as Prayer, where God is immediately preſented to the Eye of the Soul; Praise, which requires a ſublimiate Diſpoſition of Spirit; And Communicating, where the Covenant is ſealed, and the Soul inſert in eternal Life. What ſerious Preparation before theſe Duties, and what Heavenly Frame is requiſite in them in all our Approaches to God?

Secondly, I propoſed to give ſome Directions how to attain this Preparation. And 1. Get a punctual and diſtinct Knowledge of the State of your Souls, whether they be in Nature or in Grace 2. Without the diſcuſſing of this ye can never approach acceptably,

nor be distinct in your Errands to the Throne of Grace. 2. Take pains on your Hearts in private, before ye come to Duty, make them tender and fit for receiving divine Impressions, set them open that Christ may come in at the Trifling-hour, make Room in your Souls empty of Sin and Vanity, That the Spirit may work with Freedom and Liberty; Get them melted and sublimate in Meditation. 3. Sift thy self as in the immediate Presence of God, as if there were none but He and thee in the World, set him continually before thee, but especially in Approaches to Duty. 4. Be satisfied with nothing in thy Approaches but the Presence of God, his Glory filled the Tabernacle under the Law, and his Presence is as Noble and Magnificent under the Gospel, convincing, enlightning, humbling, melting, inflaming, comforting, strengthening and quickning the Soul; these are the Signs of his Presence, without which allow not thy self to be satisfied, but cry earnestly for Light, Life, Power, and Quickning. 5. Any thing thou gets of this, beware of smothering it, but nourish and foment the same, *Keep your selves in the love of God, Jude ver. 21.* If thou murder these divine Motions in their Conception, they will be as an untimely Birth. 6. Get Love to God in all your Approaches flaming in your Souls; this is an Effect of Union with him, and will transform you into his Likeness, and assimilate you to him. 7. Furnish your Hearts richly with the Word of God, which will at all times keep a Duty-edge on them, and keep from Sin, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, Colos. 3. 16.* Then may you say with the Psalmist, *Psal. 119. 11. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.* This will keep both Heart and Life Upright, *Psal. 37. 31. The Law of his God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide.* 8. Call your Hearts frequently to an Account, else ye will never prepare them for Duty, *Psal. 77. 6. — I communed with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search.* Men who jealous these to whom their Stocks are committed make short Reckonings, you have Ground to jealous your Heart more than any thing in the World, for *it is deceitful above all things, Jer. 17. 9.* Therefore frequently put the Question to it, *O my heart whither hast thou been to day? whither wanderest thou?* 9. As ye would prepare for Duty, beware of plunging your selves into a Multiplicity of earthly Business, when the Man launches out here, he loses Sight of God: O to be able to say with Seneca an Heathen, *I do not give but lend my self to my Business* I my Shop takes not my Heart from my Closet. 10. Carefully observe the first Declinings of your Hearts from God, and stop there; Heart-neglects connived at, quickly encrease in more Ungodliness. 11. Habituate your Hearts to spiritual Meditations in the Intervals of Duties, this is a noble Way to Husband these little Portions of time betwixt Duties.

Thirdly, I shall give some *Surveys* to press Preparation for meeting with God in solemn Duties and Ordinances; As, 1. This would advance your Acquaintance with the great Mysteries of Godliness, a well prepared and experienced Heart, is a rare Help to a weak Head: It will be in stead of a Commentar on many parts of the Scripture, and will furnish you with a more clear and sweet Perception of the practical Points of Religion, than the Learned, if ungodly, Rabbinists. A Man may discourse soundly and solidly of the Nature and Effects of Faith, Troubles of Conscience, the Advantage and Suavity of Communion with God, who yet never felt the Efficacy and sweet Impression of these things on his own Heart. 2. Your serious Preparation for meeting with God in Duty, is the best Test of Heart-soundness and Sincerity. 3. This would make all Duties and Ordinances Fruitful and Comfortable to you; What precious Communion with God might ye have every time ye come thus prepared? that ye might say/

say, as *Psal. 104. 34.* *My meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord.* Whereas Unpreparedness loses all our Comforts in Duties and Ordinances. 4. It would furnish you with rich Matter in Prayer to God, when the *Heart indites a good matter touching the King.* (boiles up with good thoughts) then *the tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.* *Psal. 45. 1.* Others fault, make pauses, pump their Memories, rack their Inventions to get Words, but your *Tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.* 5. By this the decayed Power of Religion would be recovered among the People of God, the majestick Beams of Holiness should shine bright in your Conversations, should awe the World, and command Reverence from all about them. 6. This would fit you for any Condition God casts up to you, whether Prosperous or Adverse, *2 Tim. 2. 21.* 7. This would exceedingly sweeten Christian Fellowship and Society among Saints; How goodly then would thy Tents be, O *Covenanted Scotland,* and thy Tabernacles O *Edinburgh!* Then Men would say, *We will go with you, for we heard that God is with you.* *Zech. 8. 23.* Whereas Pride, Passion and Carnality, spoil Christian Fellowship, and make it a dry sapless thing, so that many Christians are even weary of it, and ready to say, *that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place, that I might leave my people and go from them.* *Jerem. 9. 2.* 8. By this the Comforts of the Spirit, and Influences of Ordinances would much longer be kept in Life on your Souls than now they are: O! What manner of Christians would ye then be? What Lives would ye live?

Observe *2d. Solitude and Retirement is a great Advantage, in the more immediate secret Service and Worship of God.*

Mount Sinai, where God manifested himself thus to the *Israelites,* was a very retired Place.

The Truth of the Doctrine is evident; Because, Solitude conduces to a Composure and Quietness suiting Duties: It carries off a great many Temptations and Diversions, which always would assault us; And it contributes to a Clearness and Distinctness of Perception of what we have in Dependence, before whom, and by what Means we may gain it.

Use 1st. If ye mind to meet with God, retire from the Noise and Din of the World; turn all things out but God, say to them as *Abraham* said to his Servants, *Stay ye here, till I go and worship yonder;* Serve an Inhibition against any thing to disturb you, or to take up that Room in your Hearts which is due to God alone.

Use 2^d. Let this Doctrine check such as invite external things to take up the Throne of their Hearts, and to an equal Share of their Time and Thoughts with their main Concern; I intreat you, as ye value your Soul's Happiness here and hereafter, beware of this: And to this End, be perswaded of the Vanity and Emptiness of every thing in time; make these subservient to the great Things of Eternity; Keep up a close Course of Ejaculation in the Intervals of Duty; Keep the Faith of the last and great Truths of Religion in Life on your Hearts, Death, Judgment, and Eternity in Heaven or Hell; Live within View of these, and that will incline you to retire from the World, and acquaint your Souls with the sweet Comfort that lies in Communion and Fellowship with God, in Solitude and Retirement. This will make you invite him, *Come my beloved, let us go forth into the fields, let us lodge in the villages, let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, if the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth, there will I give thee my loves.* *Song 7. 11, 12.* What sweet Sights (may you have in secret Retirements) of the King in his Beauty, and of the Land afar off.

Use

Use 3d. Of Exhortation, Be more frequent in your Retirements from the World, conversing with God and your own Souls! Need I add further to press you, than that you have a Cloud of Witnesses setting forth their Example and Practice as a Pattern and Rule for you to imitate, as *Isaac, Elijah, David*, yea, *Jesus Christ* our blessed Lord goes to Mountains and Deserts, spending whole Nights in secret Converse with God. But more particularly to enforce this Duty, Consider, 1. These sweet Meals in your retired Hours, are more Soul-satisfying than others: what Fraughts of divine Influences? what ravishing Emanations of the love of God shed abroad in your heart? what clear perswading Evidences of a Covenant-interest? what flowing out of the Spices, are these retired and secret Visitings attended with? 2. Consider, This will be the most convincing Evidence of the Sincerity of your Profession, without this ye have nothing to discriminate you from Hypocrites: see a pregnant Instance of this in *Jehu*, who had great show of external Zeal against *Bad* and the House of *Achab*, but he took no heed to walk in the way of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart, 2 Kings 10. 31. He had no In-work on his Soul, retired not from the Crowd about secret Duties, therefore God approved his Work, but rejected his Person as an Hypocrite. 4. This manner of Life will effectually raise a Lustre and Beauty on your Conversations, this makes the righteous more excellent than his neighbour, and shine as lights in the world. This sets the World a gazing at them, 1 Peter 4. 4. Their Life and Language is of a different Strain from others. 4. This manner of Life is the most effectual Expedient for the Improvement of your Graces, this is the Pasture where the Soul feeds on many precious Thoughts of God every Day, Psal. 63. 5, 6. Never did a Soul thrive in Grace who retired not from the Crowd to the In-work of Religion. 5. The Stability of your Souls in an Hour of Temptation depends on this, if thou be not a retiring Christian, thou wilt be an easy Prey to Satan in a Day of Trial. 6. This would make Duties and Ordinances Fruitful and Comfortable, Psal. 104. 34. 7. This would fit you for any Condition God calls you to, 2 Tim. 2. 21. If a Man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto Honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's Work, and prepared unto every good Work.

Use 4th. Of Consolation, to such who cloely ply inward and retired Work of Religion, groaning and weeping in secret over their predominant Sins, and spiritual Plagues: while other vain Professors continue abroad among the Crowd and Throng of earthly Concerns. I have three things to offer for your Comfort, 1. This argues thy Heart sound in God's Statutes, whatever thy other Gifts and Abilities come short in Uprightness of Heart will be the only Cordial on Death-bed, Isa. 38. 3. Remember now O Lord I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart. This was *Hezekiah's* chief Comfort. I am much of his Mind, who said, I would prefer the most despicable and sordid Work of a Rural Christian, to all the Victories and Triumphs of *Alexander or Cesar*. By this Christ distinguishes the formal and serious Christian, 6. 5, 6. The one is for Duties in the Street and Synagogue to get the Applause of Men, but the other is for his Closet, he drives an Home-trade, an Heart-trade. O then never be troubled for these things, a Man may have and yet be damned, but be cheered up and bless God for that which none but the Favourites and Darlings of Heaven have. 2. Whatever inward Soul-troubles thou have to conflict with, they shall all pay Tribute to thy Spiritual Advantage and Ineome. Thou art oft at, Lord, why is it thus? why go I mourning all the Day and roaring all the Night under spiritual Plagues and prevailing Sins? O! when shall I get a better of it? I have been in Travail and brought forth but Wind, I

get no Deliverance nor Outgate: Comfort and cheer up thy sinking Soul, thy God designs even thy good, even by these things: For, hereby he is letting thee see what kind of Stuff thy Heart is by Nature, and therein take Notice how much thou art obliged to free Grace, and ly prostrate wondring that ever the Lord of Glory should take such a vile Creature into his Bosom, if thy ill Heart be good for nothing else, it serves to let off and commend the unsearchable Riches of the free Grace of God. This also keeps thee Humble, and keeps thee from resting on thy own Righteousness, thy own Duties and Performances: And this will make thee more compassionate and tender toward others; Perhaps thou shouldst have little Sympathy with the Soul-troubles of others, if thou hadst less Experience of thy own. 3. Take Comfort; for God will shortly put a blessed End to thy Fears, Cares and Watchings; thou shalt be discharged of all thy Sorrows, and never cry out any more, *O my hard, proud, vain, earthly Heart*: All Blindness shall be purged out of thy Mind, all Vanity from thy Thoughts, and thou shalt be everlastingly and ravishingly entertained with infinite and glorious Perfections of God. O for that Day! Even so come Lord Jesus, *Make haste my Beloved, and be like a Roe or a young Hart on the Mountains of Spices.*

Observe 3d, *The Dispensation of the Law and Covenant under which Believers lived in the Old Testament, was Earthly, Dark, and full of Terror.*

This is signified in the Text by, *The Mount that might be touched, the Blackness, Dark-ness and Tempest, that made even Moses say, I exceedingly Fear and Quake.*

For Explication of this Point, I shall First, Premise some Considerations for preventing Mistakes. Secondly, Shall prove the Truth of the Doctrine.

For better understanding this Subject, and preventing Mistakes, I premise, First, That Believers under the Old, were saved by the same Covenant of Grace, as Believers under the New Testament; We do indeed enjoy a far clearer and sweeter Dispensation, but it is the same Covenant: For the Mediator is the same, *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*, Heb. 13. 8. *He is the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*, Revel. 13. 8. His Death and Sacrifice was effectual from the Beginning of the World for the Redemption of Believers. *There is no other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we must be saved*, Acts 4. 12. The Condition of the Covenant is also the same Faith in the Messiah, without which it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11. 6. All the Patriarchs died in Faith not having received the Promises, but having seen them at a distance, Heb. 11. 13. And the Promises of the Covenant were substantially the same even under the Old Testament; Believers had the Promises of Grace and Glory, *Psalm 84. 11. of God to be their God*, Jerem. 31. 33. of the glorious Resurrection, and of Pleasures in God's right Hand for evermore, Job 19. 25. *Psalm 16. 10.* 2ly, It is to be considered, as the Messiah coming in the Flesh drew nearer, so the Discovery of him and of the Covenant of Grace was more clearly manifested, as the dawning Light that shines more and more unto the perfect Day. The Promise given to Adam, Gen. 3. 15. was obscure, to Abraham it was given more clearly, Gen. 17. 7. Chap. 22. 16, 17, 18. In *Isaac's Blessing* the Promises were more full and distinct, Gen. 26. 11, 12. *Blessed be thy name*. Yet the whole ceremonial Law did typifie the Messiah, These Promises given to David were yet more plain and clear, as we may read at large in *Psalm 2, 16, 22, 45, 68, 85, 89, 110.* And yet brighter did the Discovery of the Messiah of the Covenant of Grace and Spiritual Promises shine by the Ministry of the Prophets who succeeded David, as we may read in *Isaiah*, Chap. 7. 14. Chap. 9. 6. Chap. 11. 42, 49, 53, 54, 55. *Jerem.* 23. 6. Chap. 31. 30 — 35. Chap. 32. 37 — 42. *Daniel* 9. 25, 26, 27. *Micah* 5. 2. *Haggai* 2. 7. *Zech.* 11. 13. Chap.

Chap. 12. 10. Chap. 13. 7. *Adachi* 3. 11. Chap. 14. 1. Thus the Lord trained up the ancient Church from one Degree of Knowledge to another, till at length the *Sun of Righteousness* did arise, and the nearer his Approaches were, his People were the more elevate with Hope and Expectations of him. 3ly, Tho' the Ministration of the Law at Mount Sinai was very terrible, yet even there did the Lord renew the Covenant with his People, *Deut. 5. 2, 3. The Lord our God made a Covenant with us at Horeb.* — Exod. 34. 27. *The Lord said to Moses, Write thou these words, for after the tenor of these words I have made a Covenant with thee and with Israel.* This was no other than the Covenant of Grace, for the Lord declared himself to his People, to be their God, *Exod. 3. 6.* to be their Redeemer, to deliver them from Misery, *Exod. 20. 2.* and to pardon their Iniquity, *Exod. 34. 6, 7.* And on the other Hand, they become his peculiar People, *Exod. 19. 5.* this Covenant was confirmed by the sprinkling of Blood upon the Altar, to signify the sprinkling of the Blood of Christ to satisfy divine Justice; and upon the People, to signify their Application of the Merits of Christ, for the Pardon of their Sins, and Acceptance of their Persons; compare *Exod. 24. 6, 7, 8.* with *Hebr. 9. 19, 20.* Chap. 12. 24. And this Covenant was sealed with the Seals of the Covenant of Grace; namely, *Circumcision and the Passover.* 4ly, And Lastly, I premise, That as all these Appearances of God under the Old Testament, were suited to the Nature of the Mind of God, to be declared by them, so was this Appearance at Mount Sinai, when the Lord appeared to Abraham, *Gen. 18. 1, 2.* it was in the Shape and Likeness of a Man, as a *Prædium* of his future Incarnation: To Moses, as a fire in the bush burning not consumed, *Exod. Chap. 34.* To shew Affliction in the Church should not consume it, because of his Presence in it: To Joshua he appeared as an armed Man, with his sword drawn in his Hand, *Josh. 5. 13:* to assure him of Victory over his Enemies. But here he appears encompassed with all Dread and Terror, to represent the Holiness and Severity of the Law, with the inevitable Destruction of Sinners, who betake not themselves to Relict in the Gospel. These Appearances were the Glory of the Old Testament, and the grand Security of the Faith of Believers, yet but obscure Resemblances of what is now seen in the Gospel Church, where God is manifest in the flesh, dwelling among us. These things being premised, I come,

Secondly, To prove the Truth of the Doctrine, That the Dispensation of the Law and Covenant under the Old Testament, was Earthly, Dark, and full of Terror. And First, It was Earthly, they came in a *Man* which might be touched, the first Covenant had Ordinances of Divine Service and a Worldly Sanctuary, *Hebr. 9. 2.* the Ordinances were Literal and Carnal, consisting mostly in Externals, which could not, as such, purify nor purge the Conscience, nor perfect the Worshippers, but the Ordinances of the New Testament are Substantial, Standing Ordinances, which stand more in Spirituals, less in Externals, *John 4. 20* — 24. The Promises under that Dispensation were also Earthly, most of them being of the good things to be enjoyed in the Land of Canaan; And Spiritual Promises were more sparingly dispensed, not so plentifully and plainly, as under the Gospel. The Threatnings were also Earthly, a long black Roll of dreadful temporal judgments denounced against the Breakers of that Covenant, *Levit. Chap. 26. Deut. Chap. 28:* 2ly, As the Dispensation of the Law was Earthly, so it was Dark, the Mount was clothed with Blackness and Darkness, the Heavenly Doctrine of Salvation was not so plainly manifested as now, the Doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the God-head, the Doctrine of the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Christ, and of the transcendent Love of God, the Riches of his Grace, Union with himself, and

the Witness of his Spirit, were not so clearly discovered, as in the New Testament; the spiritual Meaning and Sense of the Law is more fully expounded by Christ, *Chap. 5, 6, 7.* than under the Old Testament; the *Recompence of Rewards, the Inextinguishable Inheritance, the Saints resting Place, their Conspiring to and Communion with the Lord in Glory*, was but obscurely hinted, but now it is made so plain, in the New Testament, as he who runs may read it. 3ly, This Dispensation of the Law was full of Terror, *The Mount sin burned with Fire, there was the sound of Trumpets, and the Gates of Hades, and so terrible was the Sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.* The Terrible Lands of this legal OEconomy may further appear, 1. Because the Commandments were many, but the Strength of Christ, and the Assistance of his Spirit in performing them, not so fully discovered as now, neither were they so sweetened with the alluring Motive of the Love of Christ, *2 Cor. 5: 14.* 2. There was not so full Effusion and Outpouring of the Spirit of Grace as is now, it did then but drop, now it is poured out; the *Assurances of Faith* were not so distinct, the Doctrine concerning Christ his Offices and Offices, not being clearly discovered; according to the Measure of Faith, so is that of Love, *for Faith worketh by Love, Gal. 5: 6.* The Promises which are the Ground of our Hope were not so fully displayed as under the Gospel, so Saints could not so distinctly expect the Performance of them. Christ revealed, is called, *The Consolation of Israel, Luke 2: 25.* When there was little concerning him revealed, there could be less Ground of Comfort. 3. There was a greater Terror upon the Spirits of Saints under the Old Testament, *2 Tim. 1: 7. Rom. 8: 15.* They wanted these Grounds of Consolation the Lord allows us now more plentifully, and the Lord's signal Appearances taking Vengeance on their Sins was frequent and terrible, *Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, rebelled, and the Earth opened, and swallowed them up; Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord, and there came out fire and devoured them, Uzza was smitten for rash touching the Ark.* Some thousands of the *Benjaminites* died for curious looking on it. 4ly, They were then kept under Terror by the rigorous and burdensome Service of the Ceremonial Law, which the Word of God calls *a Task which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear, Acts 15: 10.* Weak and beggarly Elements, *Gal. 4: 9.* Carnal Ordinances imposed all the time of this Dispensation, *Heb. 9: 10.* A handwriting of Ordinances, which was against us, and contrary to us, *Col. 2: 14.* What a great Burden were their costly Sacrifices, if any had but touched anything ceremonially Unclean, he must come and offer Sacrifice, *a Bullock or a Lamb.* They had long tedious Journeys to Jerusalem, which lay almost at the one End of the Land, and there all Males must appear thrice a Year before the Lord. How many new Moons and other Festivals were they obliged to keep? How many Restraints were they under as to Meats; and in a Word, the whole Ceremonial Service was but a temporary Ordinance, calculate to typify Christ to come, and to awaken their Desires after him, and the choice Gospel Privileges he was to bring, which the most eminent Saints under the Old Testament had the Prospect of, and longed for, *John 8: 56. Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my Day, and he saw it and was glad.* *Matth. 12: 7. Many Prophets and Righteous Persons desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things which ye hear, and have not heard them.* *Old Simeon waited for the Consolation of Israel, and Anna the Prophetess, and others with her looked for the Redemption in Jerusalem, Luke 2: 25, 38.* From this Doctrine take a few Inferences.

Inference 1. Was the Dispensation of the Covenant under the Old Testament Dark, and full of Terror? Then we have Ground to bless God we are delivered from it; it was really made void and null by the Death of Christ, *Rom. 7: 4.* Its Preceptive Part is fulfilled,

fulfilled; and its Significative Part exhibited, and therefore is of no further Force, and we are declared to be free from it by the Decree of the Synod of the Apostles, *Acts 15. 10.* The observing of these Ceremonies and Service required under the Old Testament, was inconsistent with the calling of the Gentiles; all the Males from *India, Europe and America*, and the Islands of the Sea, could not appear before the Lord thrice a Year at *Jerusalem*, what Temple, yea what Land could contain them? Where should they have *Bullocks for Burnt-offering*, or *Altars for the Sacrifice*? The Prophets by Divine Inspiration foretold the abolishing of these Ordinances given at Mount Sinai, (I mean concerning Ceremonies, for the Moral Law is perpetually binding) *Jer. 31. 31, 32. Dan. 9. 27. Jer. 3. 16. 1/4. 19, 20.* and the Gospel declares us free of them, *John 4. 23, 24. Acts 15. 10, 28, 29. Gal. 4. 10, 11. Chap. 4. 1.*

Inference 1. Yea how much are we obliged to God, who has given us a more clear and easie Gospel Dispensation, we may know more of Jesus Christ than *Abraham, Isaac or Jacob*; we may make use of him as our Prophet, Priest and King, as our Righteousness and Strength, who has satisfied the Law for us, and helps us to perform it more distinctly than any of the Patriarchs or Prophets before his Incarnation could do. O Praise him for this, ascribe Honour and Dominion to him, who has loved us, and washed us in his own Blood, and made us Kings and Priests to God and his Father, *Rev. 12. 6.*

Inference 2. Has our Lord delivered us from that dark Dispensation of the Old Testament so full of Terror, and given us these noble Gospel Privileges; how should this oblige you to *Jervelhim* in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of your Life? to outstrip the Saints under the Old Testament? And yet, alas, where is there now a Saint eminent in Faith like *Abraham*, in fervent wrestling like *Jacob*, in Meekness like *Moses*, in Patience like *Job*, in Zeal and Courage like *Daniel*, or in publick Spiritdness for God's Interest like *Abraham and Ezra*? Alas, we improve not our Gospel Mercies, and therefore it is to be feared God may be provoked to deprive us of them.

Observe 4. That when God deals with Men by the Law, he will let them see nothing but himself, and their own Conscience, he takes them out of their Reliefs, Reserves and Retreats, whereby they used to shield themselves from the Terror and Efficacy of the Law. A Sinner thoroughly convinced can find no Relief but by the Blood of Christ.

Method may require one, 1. To show what it is sinners endeavour to shelter in from the Terror of the Law. 2. How God in dealing with them will strip them Naked of these Shifts. 3. Why he will do so.

1. The Devil and your Hearts conspire to present you with some false Grounds of Hope and Peace, to screen you from the Terror of the Law; as 1. Sure ye are not called to deprive your selves of the Comforts and common Privileges of Men; but if ye give way to the fearful Alarms of God's fiery Law, ye will have no Peace, but constant Terror. But consider, I pray you, ye are now false to Complement the Devil with your Souls, for ye take him not up as an Enemy, but respect his Counsel as a Friend; but I assure you he is playing his own Game with you, he will bind you with his Subtilties, as *David* did *Samson*, and having put out your eyes, he will set you fast to Hell. Ye talk of depriving your selves of Peace and Comfort, what Demandedness is this? not to distinguish betwixt true and false Peace, *1/4. 57. 21. There is no Peace to the Wicked, saith my God.* Under this Peace lies real War betwixt God and you, what a Mock picture on God, when ye think he sees not the Cheat; but he not deceived, he will not be mocked. I can assure you, ye shall never get true Peace till ye part with

with this false Peace, and there is a Curse on all your common Comforts, if they be only the Fruits of false Peace.

2ly, When the Law attacks, there is another Shelter they hide in, *viz.* Why should I be singular? The greater Part were never among these Mount Sinai Thunderings; if none get right Peace but who fetch it out of these plunging Depths of Law Work, Heaven will have many empty Rooms. But consider, how can ye be so daring bold, as to call God a liar, who has said, *Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God*, John 3. 3. will ye. Born Heaven without these Qualifications of Peace and Holiness, which are indispensibly Necessary, Heb. 12. 14. The Temptation tells you of the Paucity of Saints, this should not scare you from Piety; the more rare, the more Excellent, this commends the Way to Heaven, and should make you press in thither, because the Generality are going to the Pit with a Lie in their right Hand. God has *Ten thousand times ten thousand* of these who stood among *Darkness and Blackness* on Mount Sinai of his thundering Law, and now through *Faith and Patience* are inheriting the Comforts of Mount Zion above; and for you, except ye abandon your Sins and Counterfeits of Holiness, ye shall never come there.

3ly, Some when the Law presents its Charges, shelter under the Wings of Mercy in God; There, say they, we will Hope and Trust; we will do as well in Answer to what the Law requires of us as we can, and what more can be sought or required of us. But let me ask you, how got ye there? Will Mercy screen you without Satisfaction to Justice for Violation of God's holy Law? Are ye not told, that *by no means he will clear the Guilty*? Where is the Extract of your Absolution from that Charge on your fleeing to the Cautioner on Sight of your Names in the Curse! As for your Hope and Trust in Mercy, it is what we are to exhort you to, but be sure ye have valid Grounds for the same; where is the Word on which ye were caused to hope, where is your Soul-alarming Discoveries of Sin by the Law of God; and your Outgate by receiving Christ in the Offers of the Gospel, without which ye are inevitably bound over to Wrath.

4ly, Some turn aside to the Duties of Religion, and there they shelter. But if Duties alone save you, then Christ died in vain; can ye by them pacify the Wrath of God, or repair his impaired Honour? Is it of your selves your Duties take their Efficacy? What renders them acceptable, is it not the Merits of the Death of Christ interposed to cover you, and the Imperfections of your Duties, without which ye are undone.

5ly, Others flee to the Promises of the Covenant, and there they shelter. But where is your Title to these? Have ye inward Evidences of these Graces of Faith, Love, Repentance, and new Obedience; to give you Ground to make use of the Promises for your Comfort? Did the Threats of the Law as Arrows of the King pierce your Hearts, to make way for applying of the Promises?

6ly, Others, God deals well with them, by conferring Affluence of earthly good Things on them; and this they take as an Evidence that they are in Favour with God, and never hearken to any Convictions of the Law. But from common Mercies to infer special Grace and Favour, is utterly inconcludent, and is a palpable Cheat to blindfold thee, for Love and Hatred is not known by these things: Dare thou say, these are Fruits of special Love? I answer, if they be, they will warm thy Heart with Love to God, fill thy Practice with further Tenderness, and Zeal for his Glory, and cause thee walk humbly and self-independently before him. If they be not attended with these Effects,

Effects, jealous thy self, that they be call'd in as Heart-hardning Judgments, and not as special Mercies.

75. Others, their present State of Health promises them time to amend what is amiss; therefore they will not take the Alarm so hot, say the Law for their Conviction what it will. But consider, tho' thou should live Methuselah's Age, it is not in thy Power to repent of Sin and believe on Christ, it is the Lord who promises and bestows this Grace upon thee, Eph. 1. 19. Zech. 12. 10. Who gave thee a Lease of thy Life in thy own Hand? Art thou not standing Centinel, not knowing what Hour Death and Judgment takes thee, thou may be arrested by a sudden and surprising Blow, *This Night thy Soul may be taken from thee*; therefore now while Opportunity lasts, entertain, and do not shelter thy self by these Coverings of Fig-leaves from the Convictions of the Law; but let these lead thee in to the Remedy provided by Jesus Christ in the Gospel.

Secondly, I proposed to shew how God in dealing with Men does strip them naked of these things whereby they assay to shelter themselves from the Terror of the Law: And 1. By opening up the glorious Holiness, Dread and Aw of the Justice of God, which their Souls were ignorant of before, Isa. 6. 1, — 6. When the Prophet saw the Lord sitting upon his Throne, high and lifted up, and his Train filling the Temple, and heard the Seraphims crying, *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory*, then he cried, *Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a Man of unclean Lips, and I dwell in the midst of a People of unclean Lips*. When the Light shone round about Paul, and he heard the Voice crying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me*, then he trembling, said, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts 9. 3, — 6. 2ly, By discovering the exceeding sinfulness of Sin in the Glass of the Law, Rom. 7. 9. When the Commandment came, Sin reviv'd and I died. 3ly, By discovering the Emptiness and Vanity of these Subterfuges as a Plaster no ways suiting the Sore, so they are put to throw away these Fig-tree Leaves, and are set up Naked before the Point of Justice's Sword in the Hand of God's terrible and holy Law.

Thirdly, I am to shew why the Lord will strip Men naked of these Subterfuges, whereby they shelter themselves from God's holy Law; and 1. Because till all these be put out of Sight, there is no Access to deal with Man's Heart, which turns always aside to these starting Holes, and will never go out of it self for Refuge. 2ly, Otherways Christ would never be valued nor prized, but trampled upon and undervalued; the Apostle counted these things that were gain, *Loss for Christ, ye counted all things but Loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, for whom he suffered the loss of all things*, Phil. 3. 7, 8. he threw all things over Board, that he might secure Christ to his Soul. 3ly, Till you quite these Subterfuges, there can be no Heart-conviction nor Humiliation for Sin, till you see your selves lost and undone, you will never bemoan your selves, nor cry out for a Saviour.

Inference 1. When God by his Law arrests you, Beware of assaying to struggle with it, and to despise it; *Philistines in David's weakness*, give it full Room to discharge its Errand against you.

Inference 2. When by the Law ye are discovered as lost, and strip Naked of your Refuges of Lazine, lend your Ear and Heart to that Gospel, presenting the Remedy; ye destroyed your selves, *laying the Law in the Dust of your Feet*, says the Gospel, *Christ is the End of the Law for every man that believeth*, Rom. 10. 4.

Observe

Objective: *These Souls laid under Arrest by the Convictions, Charges, and Challenges of the holy Law of God, the Spirit of God usually fills them with Dread, Fear and Terror.*

Altho' these Particulars in the Text serve to set out this *O* the intolerable Agony and Soul-perplexing Pain they are under. Such a wounded Spirit who can bear? This Fire, Blackness, Darkness and Tempest who can endure, yet through these shall thou pass in lesser or greater Degree, before thou arrive at the Comforts of Mount Zion, before thou find the sweet Fruits of a Covenant Interest in Christ.

To prepare this Doctrine for your Use, I shall: 1. Propose some Considerations to clear it. 2. Prove the Truth of the Doctrine. 3. Explain the Nature of this Work. 4. Give Reasons why the Lord takes this Way of converting Sinners. 5. Add some Cautions for preventing Mistakes. 6. Answer some Objections.

The Considerations I premise for clearing the Doctrine, are these. First, This Doctrine carries a Disguist with it to many Palats, especially in our Day, wherein People are addicted to a pleasurable Religion, a Christ at a cheap and easy Rate, without the Expeience of the Terrors and Disquiets of Conscience, which usually, tho' not always in the like Degree accompany the new Birth. 2^d, The Spirit of God is the principal Agent in this Work, *Rom. 8. 14.* It is the Spirit of Bondage to Fear, which they receive as a Gift from God, which works this Perplexity and Horror in the Hearts of God's Elect in order to their Conversion and after Peace. 3^d, The Effect of this is Fear and Terror, through the Fire, Blackness, and Darkness of God's Displeasure trumpeting out it self against the Soul for Sin; hence it is called the Spirit of Fear, *2 Tim. 1. 7.* The Fear of Death. *Heb. 2. 15.* A Fear that gives a convinced Sinner a Taste of Hell, the Back of Conscience is ploughed up with the knotted Whips of its own Guilt. *The Arrows of the Almighty are within me,* (says Job, Chap. 6. 4.) *the Poison whereof drinks up my Spirit, the Terrors of God do set themselves in Array against me!* 4th, These Fears and Terrors are not Penal only, but Medicinal, they are one Sort of God's Rods by which he brings Men within the Bond of the Covenant, *Ezek. 20. 37.* and makes them enquire, *What shall I do to be saved?* *Acts 16. 30.* the Design of them all is, to make Sinners flee to the Rock that is higher than they.

Secondly, I am next to prove the Truth of the Doctrine, which is evident. 1. From Scripture, it is the Office of the Spirit of God to convince of Sin, *John 16. 8.* to be a Spirit of Bondage to Fear, *Rom. 8. 15.* to strive with Sinners, *Gen. 6. 3.* hence Ministers of the Gospel are said to bind as with an to loose the Conscience, *Matth. 16. 19.* *Ch. 18. 18.* 2^d, The Experience of many Saints may attest it, that nothing is so fearful and terrible as Conscience thus awakened by the Law in the Hand of the Spirit of God. For 1. In all other Trials we have to do but with Creatures as Means and Instruments, but in this we conflict with God himself immediately; frail Man with Omnipotent God; and sinful Man with a holy God. *Nab. 1. 60.* In all other Trials Man is like a Friend to himself, Favours himself, and assays to bring in Comfort to his heavy Heart; but here he is at War with himself, an Enemy to himself, he looks in Matter what he can both imaginary and true to lessen the Beat, and abate his Horror. He gazes always in the magnifying Glass wherein the Devil's hellish Malice makes an infinite Addition to his innumerable Sins and Aggravations thereof; intpleys his Learning to argue against the Pardon of his Sins, and Possibility of Salvation, he wounds even his Wounds with a Conceit they are incurable, and voices his Vexation with railing, to be comforted. 3^d, These spiritual Pangs do infinitely exceed both in Duration of Sense, and Intension of Sorrow, the most exquisite Tortures can be inflicted on the Body,

Tanto

Tanto plus intolerabilior quanto Spiritus corpore subtilior. 45. This is tempered with such strong and strange Ingredients of extraordinary Fears, that it makes a Man a Terror to himself, and to all his Friends; to tremble at his own Shadow, to be in great Fear where no Fear is, full of feigned Honours, ghastly Apparitions, imaginary Hells, which yet have real Stings, and impress true Tortures on his woful trembling Heart. 46. To confirm this, you may notice the Outcries of some eminent Worthies under their Conflicts with terrible and fearful Wrath. *Hezekiah*, Isa. 38. 13. says, *I reckoned till Morning, that as a Lion so will he break all my Bones: from Day even to Night wilt thou make an end of me.* Veril. 14. *Like a Crane or a Swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a Dove: mine Eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.* Job is another Proof of this Doctrine, Chap. 13. 26. *Thou wilt bitter things against me, and makest me possess the Iniquities of my Youth.* Chap. 6. 4. *The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poyson whereof drinketh up my Spirit: the Terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.* David's Experience is an eminent Witness of this, *Psal. 32. 3, 4. When I kept silence, my Bones waxed old: through my roaring all the Day long. For Day and Night thy Hand was heavy upon me. Psal. 38. 2, 3. Thine Arrows stick fast in me, and thy Hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my Flesh, because of thine Anger: neither is there any rest in my Bones, because of my Sin. And Heman, Psal. 88. 15. I am afflicted and ready to die from my Touth up, while I suffer thy Terrors I am distracted.* 61. No Arm of Flesh or Art of Man, no Earthly Comfort or created Power can possibly heal or help in this heavy Distress, Heaven and Earth, Men nor Angels, Friends nor Physick, Gold nor Silver, Pleasures nor Preferments; No, an omnipotent Hand and infinite Skill must take this in Hand, else no Recovery in this World or in the World to come.

Thirdly, I proposed to explain the Nature of these Convictions of the Law, whereby the Spirit of God usually fills Men with Dread & Terror. Now, this Work goes under the Name of Conviction, the through riveting home of which is the Design of all these legal Terrors, and because the Spirit convinceth in a rational Way, all its Acts of that Nature are comprized in this Syllogism, — *Every one that is in a State of Sin, is in a State of Wrath: But thou art under a State of Sin; therefore under Wrath, and the Curse of God.*

To be more Particular in this Work, there are three several distinct Convictions; First, Of the Law, which is the Charge. Secondly, Of the Fact, which is the Inditement, or Evidence. Thirdly, A Conviction of your State, which is the Sentence past thereupon. Lastly, There are some Consequences following upon the Whole.

As to the First, The Conviction of the Law consists in the Illumination of the Mind in the Truth of common Principles, and Rules of Scripture, which determine the State of such as falls under them: As that by nature we are all children of wrath, *Ephes. 2. 1. By the offence of one many are dead.* Judgment is by one to condemnation, *Rom. 5. 15, 16. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, &c.* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. *He that believes not is condemned already.* John 3. 18. *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Luke 13. 5. When we give Consent to these as Truths, this works up the first Part of the Work, but it will not thoroughly gain the Soul, except it be seconded by a Conviction of Fact, which is a particular Application of the Law to the Person, *Thou art the Man of whom this Law speaks, this and that thou hast done wickedly, and art guilty.* *Psal. 50. 21.* This Inditement Conscience is called in to Witness, and because this Witness is sometimes asleep, blind, dead, or bribed, the Spirit enlightens, quickens, and makes it speak out the Case in Hand. When this

preached, *Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made the same for them whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* His Hearers were pricked to their hearts, and said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, *What shall we do?* Acts 2. 36, 37. their Consciences smote them, and they cried out, *We are guilty.* But this is pushed further home, 28, By the Conviction of Sense, which is the Work of the Judge clothed with Fire, Darkness, and Blackness, sounding the Trumpet to the guilty Soul, to come hear and receive the Sentence pronounced against himself, thus, *Thou Pannel, being found Guilty, must return to Prison, and be carried thence to the Place of Execution, and there be Pressed on the Wheel, Drawn, Quartered, and Brought.* So the Spirit does not barely say, Thou art a condemned Creature, but represents a Gule hunting, a Power setting, and Wrath rending the poor Soul, shews Hell open, Heaven shut, the Devil Tormenting and God deriding; Eternal Death without Light, tormenting Heat, yet Gnashing of Teeth for Cold, a Lake of Fire and Brimstone, and the Breath of the Lord like a stream of Brimstone doth kindle it, Isa. 30. 33. 44, The Consequents of this Conviction, are, 1. Soul confounding Horror, when the Jaylor was was convinced he came in trembling to Paul and Silas, Acts 16. 29. like the Hand writing upon the Wall, at which Belshazzar's countenance was changed, his thoughts troubled him, the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another, Dan. 5. 6. and no wonder, for it was the Justice and Wrath of the infinite God which made Christ himself sweat great drops of blood, Luke 22. 44. 2. Another Consequent is Soul-distressing Anguish, by which the perplexed Mind finds on its own sad Condition, thus bound fast with Horror, ever tormented with Representations of its Misery, as a condemned Man Eats, Drinks, Sleeps not, for thinking on his Execution; he dreams of the Gallows and the Hangman: Sense of Wrath made the Psalmist eat asbestine bread, and mingle his drink with weeping, Psal. 102. 9. 3. Soul-distressing Despair, I speak not of that which bolts out all Relief, but that which excludes all possible Means, except the infinite Mercy of God, and Blood of Christ.

Before I proceed further, I may meet with a Doubt or two of some poor Friends of Christ. An Minister (say they) this is sad and melancholly Doctrine. May I ask, First, *Must we all alike be plunged into these Depths?* Secondly, *When may we dare to take Comfort after so shaken?* As to the First, Far be it from me to limit you to such a Measure of Conviction and Sorrow, I have no Commission to do so; God deals variously, because of different Constitutions of his People, some a Pin is sufficient to Lance their Boils, but others must have a sword ere it can be done to Purpose. If you so far tasted of this Cup of Gall and Wormwood, as makes you vomit up the loathsome Abominations of Sin, as to discover your selves gone in your selves, and to see the indispensable Necessity of Jesus Christ, and content to embrace him on his own Terms, to be for him, and not for another: I have no further Burden from the Lord to lay upon your Consciences.

As to the second Doubt, *When dare ye take Comfort?* Truly it goes beyond my Reach to determine precisely, neither seems it so needful, only there wants not Danger in reaching at Comfort before it is fit for you, or you for it, but that I leave you not altogether unsatisfied, and lest I wound any broken Souls: When you find these things in your Case, it would seem no Presumption to take Comfort, 1. When the Soul is brought to see a through Necessity of Jesus Christ, and so accordingly closes with him by Faith, sure these Waters of the Well of Life belong to every one that Taketh, and to whom Christ belongs, Comfort belongs. 2. As soon as you are within Reach of any Promise, which you

you may, thou hast, 1. When you find your self weary of the Bonds and Fetters of Sin, more than of those of Trouble and Anguish for Sin; when thou hates Satan as a Tempter as much as a Troubler; and art crying, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* 2. When thou can be content to take Christ on his own Terms, to Teach and Rule, as well as to Redeem and Save thy Soul; when thou can freely deny Part, and resign with every thing for him, can give up thy self to be made any thing by him; and entertain nothing that displeases him; then thou has a Title to that Blessing, *He hath filled the hungry with good things.* Luke XI. 13. 3. Then thou art fit for Comfort when content if God see it fit thou be longer without it, saying, *Lord, if my rotten Heart be not broken enough, break it more; if my festered Wounds be not scarfed enough, lance them more and deeper. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. And let it be as thy wicked men, in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* Psal. 139. 23, 24.

Fourthly, I come to give Reasons why the Lord useth this way of convincing and converting Sinners: And 1. Because the Spirit of God as to Order and Manner of his Working, deals not with Men as with Stocks and Stones, but as with rational Agents making use of Emptiness and Appetite, to work on the moving Powers of the Soul, and carry them to an Object that will satisfy. Can you persuade a Man who finds no Fetters to cry out for Liberty? Or, that Physick is good, except he find himself Sick? Or, that this is he is in the best Way to choose another? 2. This has been God's usual way both under Old and New Testament; thus Moses after he had laid down the Moral Law for Conviction, and ratified it with a Curse, then supposing it is Work done, preacheth Christ in the Ceremonial Law, as the proper Remedy for such a Malady: Thus did also the Prophets, Isaiah in his first six Chapters, Convicts, Reproves, Threatens, and Casts down; and then follows Evangelick Comforts. Jeremiah's Commission is, *To pluck up and pull down, to root out and destroy obstinate Sinners, and then To Build, and, To Plant.* Chap. 1. 10. But more particularly the Spirit works this way, 1. Because Christ is made far more precious in Sinners Esteem, than he would be, if he dropped into their Laps without such sharpening and rousing Work; *The full Soul loathes the honey comb,* but Necessity endears any thing to us. 2. Hereby God engages his Peoples Hearts more to himself; seen Misery delivered from, obliges to Returns of Gratitude; Ezra 9. 9. *Psalm 136.* 1. 2. *Psalm 116.* 1. 2. By this, Love is made to keep even Pace with Thankfulness; the more low the Spirit sinks us in this Dungeon, the more low Thoughts will Men have of themselves, and consequently the more Love to Christ, who in such a Condition did not shun them, but made it a *matter of Love.* 3. By this Method Sin is made the more odious to a Child of God, *The young Child breeds the Fire,* the Wormwood on the Breast wounds the Child: Let old Idols and Companions now tempt, he will readily answer with the Philosopher, when the Whore valued her common Ware at so dear a Rate, *Nihil enim sunt pariter.* O had ye felt these Agues and Convulsions of Conscience which I have done, for such Courses as these; had ye been stretched on the Rack; and your Bones broken on iron Wheels, you would find out some other way of offending your time, than to be trafficking up Sorrows to your Souls here and hereafter. 4. Hereby others are terrified and restrained from Sin; they read Torments of Hell to Unconverted, in these Terms they see in Converts. 5. Thus the Spirit teaches us to Pray, to Sigh, and Groan, out unutterable Requests; when Christ suffered for our Sins, he was under a Spirit of Bondage, the Law saith, *Thou art my Prisoner, and dost the Sentence of Death;* this made him pour out his Anguish and Tears, Heb. 9. 7. How much

more when the *torments of hell* compass us about, and the *smiles of death* present us, are we obliged to call upon the Lord, *Psal. 18. 3, 6.* Thus the Spirit keeps us more humble all our Days, when you remember the *wormwood and the gall*, this may make you walk *sofly all the days of your life.* 8. This provokes Pity and Tenderness, and prevents Unconcernedness with others in the like Cases. This makes Heart to answer Heart, as Face does Face in a Glass. 9. Thus the Lord makes his People fit to receive Comfort from the Gospel Promises, as having these Qualifications to which the Promises are annexed, as *Hungry and Thirsting for Righteousness, poor in Spirit, meek and lowly minded, humble and contrite*; The more Solid the Foundation be laid in Brokenness of Heart, and spiritual Sorrow, the more Sure and Beautiful will the Superstructure of Heavenly Comforts be. 10. This makes us prize and care to keep the Favour of God when we have it, for if he hide his Face we shall be like them that go down to the pit, *Psal. 143. 7.* Lastly, This makes the Yoke of Duty more desirable to the Soul, when compared with the Heaviness of the Yoke of Sin discovered in Law-fetters.

Fifthly, I proposed to give some Cautions to prevent Mistakes from this Doctrine; And 1. Let hardened Sinners beware least when the Spirit draws with cords of love, beseeching you for Christ's sake, and by his Beauty and Excellency to be reconciled to God; beware least you grieve and quench the Spirit of Grace: I assure you, if cords of love will not draw you, he hath chains of wrath to fetter you, if you hear the calm and still voice, you may prevent the fiery thunders of the law, in that Height we have been speaking of, your bones being broken, and the poison of his arrows drinking up your Spirits. 2. Beware of Nick-naming the Spirit's coming by the Law as a Spirit of bondage. Men oft look on Troubles in Spirit as Effects of meer melancholy Distemper, more proper for the Physician not for the Divine, People ignorant of God's dealing, are apt to blaspheme the Spirit of Grace's work, and call it down-right Madnels. 3. Beware of passing wrong Judgment and rash Censure on such whom the Spirit of God hath thus stricken with Thunders of the Law; true their Wounds are grievous, but he who lanced them so deep is a Physician of Value, tender and skillful; willing and able to cure them. 4. Take heed how ye get loose who are under these Fetters, your Afflictions are for Consolation and Salvation, 2 Cor. 1. 5, 6. Do not wear them off by returning to the Vomit of sinful Pleasures, to your Cups and Comedals, or by shifting and extolling Diversions, as Fells; but entertain them till they produce the desired Effect of bringing your Souls to Christ.

Sixthly, I proposed to Answer some Objections against this Doctrine; And 1. It may be Objected you seem to drive me from Christ by what is said, at least for a time, till humbled sufficiently, whereas Christ invites, *whoever will let him come.* Answer 1. Let that Minister's Tongue cleave to the Roof of his Mouth who forbids any to come to Christ whom Christ calls. But tho' Christ calls, yet he does it under Qualifications of *Hungry and Thirsty, Isa. 55. 1.* of *weary and heavy laden*, *Matth. 11. 28.* 2. We bid not Men stay from Christ till they have such Qualifications, but invite them to come and seek these from him, which fit them for him, and without which they cannot savingly come to him. 3. Christ to whom Sinners are invited to come, is an universal Good, and so there is in him a Confluence of all good Things; every Man has Access to call for what is proper for him, and without which they cannot savingly come to him, but every Man may not be admitted to every Thing there, but such Things as his Condition is capable of, and at present he is most in need of. Objection 2d. But Ministers, we reckon our selves believers, and such thundering Doctrine does not belong to these. Answer

1. O that

1. O that all who call themselves so, would give poor Ministers good Ground to think them such; the Physician is not to believe his roaring Patient when he says, *Nothing ails him.* 2. Even Law-truths belong to Believers, either in a way of Direction as the Duties thereof; or by way of Inducement to Thankfulness, Consolation, or Humiliation, as its Curse and Terrors. 3. Tho' it belong not to thee as thy Condition is now, yet it may belong to others who are now in that Condition thou once was. *Objection 3.* But Minister, this Kind of Preaching may make the Hearts of these sad whom God would not have made sad, many rub up old Sores and make them smart again, which the Lord has closed and bound up. *Answer 1.* Suppose it be so, it is more than probable it will not be for their Hurt, it is like they built too hastily, and tho' God will not overthrow the Building, for every Failing of the Builder, yet he may strow it to discover Cracks, and shew where it needs Props. 2. Suppose the worst, that some Believer be so wounded as to question all his former Evidences, by a Word that the Minister according to the Mind of God in Scripture directed to others, he is not blameable for this; the Fault is in the Hearer, who takes not his proper Portion, or in the Cunning of Satan tempting and seducing. *Objection 4th.* But after these Shakings, I may yet miss the End and miscarry, what Comfort to me then? *Answer.* True, thou mayst yet thou has Comfort; For 1. Tho' thou mayst fail, yet thou mayst not; in thy former Condition it was not so, nothing but certain Destruction being without Hope; but now this *Valley of Achor* is for a *Door of Hope*, Hosea 2. 15. 2. Thou art in the Hand of one, whose Conduct if thou wilt follow, thou art assured not to fail, the Spirit who has brought thee this length, is an unerring Guide. 3. This Fear of thine is a good Prognostick of thy Success, a Man that is suspicious asks many Questions of all he meets, and notices their Directions, *Prov.* 14. 18. 4. If thou continue in this Self-suspecting Fear following God in the way of Duty, if thou at last miscarry, it will be a rare and singular Case, God will turn his Hand and deal otherways with thee than others, which is not to be supposed. 5. There be some things speak out this Conviction, work of the Spirit of God on thy Soul, to be Saving. As 1. When the Sins the Man is convicted of be not only *Actual* but also *Original*, he sees not only his Actions damnable, but his Nature condemned, not only of this and that Evil, but of a Body of Death; not only for open and scandalous, but for secret and spiritual Sins, that are inward and undiscovered. 2. When under these Soul-troubles he is full, free, ingenuous, and impartial, in Confession of Sins, and censuring himself, saying the worst of himself. 3. When Man justifies God and the Law, by which he stands condemned, this evidences there is Humiliation, and mightily glorifies God, *Rom.* 7. 12. *Psal.* 51. 4. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.* 4. If thy great Trouble be, least thou be selfish in thy Troubles, that it be only for fear of Hell, and thou be not enough grieved for God's being dishonoured, and that thy Sin is so contrary to the Purity of his holy Nature. 5. If thou be fearful and shy to take Sanctuary in thy own Resolutions or Promises, or in anything but in the Righteousness and Strength of Christ, this is a Sign thou wilt not split on the Rock of Self-justification, as knowing the Plague of thy own deceitful Heart. I come now to the

Use of this Doctrine, and shall improve it by speaking to four Sorts of Persons. 1. Such who have been among Mount Sinai Thunderings, and had a good Issue from the same. 2. Such who have been under them, but have lost both Sense and Fruit thereof. 3. Such who are under them to this Day. 4. Such who are Strangers to them, and

and they are either *absolute Sinners*, or *Strangers*, to such a Degree of them, being acquainted only with the calm Gospel Love Work, and drawn to Christ by these sweet Cordons.

I begin with the first, Such who have been in this Condition under the Terrors of the Law, and have got a good Outgate; to you I shall speak, 1. A Word of Consolation, 2. Of Exhortations to some particular Duties.

Now you who have got this comfortable Outgate from the Terrors of the Law, have great Grounds of Cheerfulness and Joy: For, as You may stand on the other side Jordan, on the Shore of the tempestuous Sea, and sing Songs of Deliverance, as *Moses and Israel did*, *Psalm 124*, *The Lord is my Strength and my Sing, he is become my Salvation*. You may cast back your Eyes to the Surges and Whaves, where you were lately struggling, and say with the blessed General to his fainting Soldiers, *Persevere & olim hoc meminisse juvabit*. Things hard and unpleasant to undertake, are most sweet and refreshing to remember, when we are gone through them, as *David* remembers his Afflictions, and tunes over his Outgates from them in Songs of Praise, *Psalm 124* and *136*. 2ly, You have a firm and assuring Ground of your Conversion-work, the Fire, Blackness and Darkness, and Law-terrors you have been squeezed by, and your safe landing by Faith embracing Christ; the End of these legal Terrors, are so many undeniable Witnesses, that ye are now housed in strong Holds among Prisoners of Hope. 3ly, You shall never be returned under these Terrors in like manner again; I mean not, that you shall never come under Bondage, Fear and Terror again; but these After-shakings shall not be the Spirit of Bondage, but come from Satan as a common Accuser, whose Trade is to pick Quarrels with Believers Evidences, hightning every Mole-hill to a Mountain, and drawing fearful Conclusions from the same.

Yet to you who have got this comfortable Outgate, I must drop a Word of Exhortation to these particular Duties: 1. Be very humble; Pride is not so odious in any as in him who out of Prison comes to Reign, *Ezekiel 4*. 14. Hence the *Israelites* were oft minded of the Wilderness and Egypt, to keep their Hearts low, when they came to the Land flowing with Milk and Honey, *Deuteronomy 8*. 2. 2ly, Be very watchful, for new Sins will fill you with the same Terrors, which will make your Case very Uncomfortable: The Devil watches all Opportunities to bring you back under Bondage; O then stay not within the Reach of your cruel Task-master. 3ly, Be very thankful, for how important a Work is this that God has wrought in you? A Work that accompanies Salvation: How many Difficulties and Improbabilities once damp't your Hopes, and sunk your Spirits? yet you are got over these Dangers; Sing as *Hazekiah*, *Ishai 38*. 12, 13, 14, 15. How ready were ye to say, *I shall and Day perish by the hand of Saul*, yet God has relieved you? How oft did you provoke God by your Wilderness-sins, saying, *Can God provide a Table in the Wilderness*, and yet he has disappointed your Fears, provided a Table for you, protected and preserved you? How many perils under such Convictions? Terrors which drove *Judas* to the Gallows, and *Sam* to Despair, and to thousands have been Hardning; have proven to you the Pangs of the new Birth; Odistinguishing Mercy! How should it engage and assure you to Praise and Serve the Author of the same? 4ly, Be Compassionate and Tender to others in the same Condition; your Experience may tell you how grievous Soul-troubles are, and how much need there is that these who are *weak young* should be gently led. 5ly, Endeavour some spiritual Improvement of your Shakings; Observe the Faithfulness and Fidelity of God in his Care and Affection for you, how tenderly did he bind up your Wounds when your Foot slipped, and

and your Faith staggered in that very Chock his Mercy held you up. 18y, *Oh, die you are free, keep your selves so, and that by making your Ground sure, while your good Days last, by putting an high Value on pardoning Mercy, by not wasting too much in Favours you receive, and by improving your present Allowances for advancing in Sanctification and Holiness.* 19y, Sound forth the Danger of Sin to others, you have been in the Sides and Corners of Hell, to give warning to others that they *do not* go there; *We knowing the Terror of the Lord, as per Jews Psalm;* ye have seen the Weakness of the Lord in the Depths, now you are a Shore, tell of the Rocks and Storms they are like to meet with in such Courts.

The second Sort of Persons I am to speak to in Improvement of this Doctrine, are such who have been under the Terrors of the Law, but have lost both Fruit and Sense thereof. And I shall, *First*, Shew what has made this Work fruitless and ineffectual to you. *Secondly*, Give some Directions suiting your sad Case.

As to the *First*, There are many things which may have made these Terrors of the Law fruitless and ineffectual: As 1. Careless and slothful Intermision of those Means which might have kept your Convictions fresh and lively, and your Conscience tender; as publick Ordinances improved by private Meditation, Conference and Prayer; Fire will as soon go out for want of supplying it with Fuel, as by casting Water on it. 2y, Needless Society with wicked, vain and unprofitable Company, who scold and cry out against the Seriousness and Spirituality that attends a convinced Conscience. 3y, Timorous Despondency and Cowardize of Spirit, saying, *I see no End of this Work so long as I hearken to Conscience, and justify every Sin that so trouble me, I expect Peace and Comfort, but I see now there is no hope of it, while I am so nice and scrupulous; and therefore I will give my self Liberty, and not lose my present Comforts; for these I despair ever to enjoy.* 4y, Secret hankering of Heart after some Sin and secret Idol, even under this Work of Conviction. 5y, Secret Hypocrisie, this hinders Men from searching the Ground and Bottom of their Wound; they think they are not so bad as People take them to be; they have done all, but were drawn by others; they had a good End and Design in all they have done. 6y, Spiritual Pride poudred with their Conviction, the unclean Spirit may in some notorious Lust or other be cast out, and he is restless till he again recover his Possession, *Mark. 12. 43, 44.* and therefore waits a time till the House be swept and garnished; that is, till a barren Profession be taken up, mean while Pride makes the Person carry high, and so a Lodging is furnished for the Devil, who returns and possesses it.

To this Sort of Persons I will drop a few Words of Direction and Advice, 1. Lament and Mourn over the Inefficacy of such hopeful Means for your Good; it is sad to come out of any Trouble, much more such as this, and get nothing by it, for the Spirit of God is disappointed, resisted, and quenched; it was this contested with thy proud, obstinate and rebellious Heart, and that Spirit thou so often repulled; therefore God justly resolves, *My Spirit shall not always strive with Man, because he is Flesh, Gen. 6. 3.* Your Hearts are hardened, the more thy Heart has been oft softened and melted, if it grow hard again, it grows the harder: Your Conscience is checked and discouraged, that Tenderness it once profest against every Sin is in a great Measure lost; once it was a right Censurer of your State and Case, but now it is turned partial and flattering: Ambassadors who spoke too loudly and home to thy spiritual Case, must be enjoined to do so no more, or flattered, lest Conscience newly laid asleep start and be awakened; thus did *Achan* with *Achim*, and *Herod* with *John the Baptist*. If thou go on thus, possibly

possibly thou may grow into a gross Neglect of Duties and Ordinances; an ungrounded Deserter brings Men to this, as it was got without these Means; so it is maintained without them. After this a thousand to one if thou become not a more desperate Enemy to, and Persecutor of God's Ways and People than any other, and end thy Days as *Julian the Apostate*: Therefore, how necessary is it for thee to lament and mourn over this sad Case, and take care to prevent so eminent Danger? *Advice 2.* Lay out your selves to reinduce the Impressions of the convincing Spirit of God, which you slided away, and be deeply sensible of the Danger of your Case, and follow God in all his Ordinances conscientiously for your Recovery. Against these Advices some will *Object*, 1. If I could do this, I should not need to complain, I have a hard and impenitent Heart; you bid me, Get a penitent Heart, that is not in my Power. *Answer*, Be sensible of your Hardness and Impenitency, and this may affect thy Heart more than any thing else. If you can attain to a Heart sensible of resisting the Spirit of Grace, you are so far recovered. And as for that Part of the *Objection*, I bid you get a penitent Heart; but it is not in your Power, I mean not as if thou had Power in thy self to do it, but if thou Address God by serious importunate Prayer to take away that Resistance by which the Spirit is oft repulsed; he will do it for thee. *Objection 2.* But I have Joy and Peace at present, and the Method you advise me to will rob me of this. *Answer*, Better break an unsound Peace, than live in it till Death and Hell break it whether you will or not: You can have no true Peace till this false Peace be broken, when you are at Peace with God, you will be at War with Idols and beloved Sins. *Objection 3.* But I had a great Name for Religion and I will be shamed to say, I have been beguiling my self, and deluding others. *Answer*, If thou continue, all thou can expect is to Land at Hell, without letting others know thou art going thither; but it seems thou lays God's Glory and thy own in the Ballance, whereas if thou were sincere, thou would be willing to be humbled, that God may be exalted, *Isa. 2. 17.* and then the Lord would exalt thee in due Season, *1 Peter 5. 6.* The Course thou steers tends to thy everlasting Shame, but this we advise thee to, is for thy everlasting Glory. *Objection 4.* May not God save me without returning these lost Convictions? *Answer*, By his royal Prerogative he may do above and contrair to his own prescribed Rules when he pleaseth, but it is most improbable that he will renew any Man that is an Apostate from former Convictions without deep Humiliation; it would encourage convinced Sinners to break his Bands, and cast off his Cords. *Objection 5.* But if I be such an Apostate, possibly it will be as much to God's Glory to reject me, I fear he will not receive so desperate a Wretch as I have been, tho' humbled never so much. *Answer*, This may indeed be a Caution against resisting and quenching the Spirit, least the Lord be provoked to Arrest the Conscience with damping Terrors, and with these to send the Apostate a packing to Hell. But since thou acknowledges God's Justice in so doing, it gives Ground to Hope thou accepts of the Punishment of thy Iniquity, and desires to be humbled under the Sense thereof. To such as thou art the Lord gives Promises of Acceptance and Approbation, *Jer. 3. 12-14.* — *Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine Anger to fall upon you. — Only acknowledge thine Iniquity — Turn backsliding Children, for I am married to you. Hos. 14. 4. I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely.*

The third Sort of Persons I am to speak to in Improvement of this Doctrine are such who are at present under Law-terrors. To you I shall give some Directions how to carry in this Case; as 1. Tho' under a Storm, weary not of it, haste not too much to be

be free of it, *He that believes makes no haste*; be a Student of Patience at such a time, a sick Man is content to be made sicker in Order to Health. *2ly*, Be thy Case never so clamant, and the Tempest never so fearful, lay not aside Hope, but maintain and keep it up against all threatned Dangers, by setting against them the Promises which the Scripture is every where full of, to such as are in thy Condition, and the Examples of many eminent Saints recorded there, who have got a blessed Out-gate, and are this Day before the Throne singing Salvation to our God, and to the Lamb. If it be Objected, How can I Hope, for this comes from Faith, and I cannot believe? *Answer*, The Grace of Hope does proceed from Faith in Order of Nature, and is a Fruit of Conversion; *1 Pet. 1. 3.* But there is a Moral or Rational Hope, which is gathered from the general Promises of Scripture in a Rational Way, and because it is but a general probable Hope accompanied with Opinion, it may be called *Negative*; I am not excluded from the Promise of Salvation. The Grace of Hope is *Positive*, I am Included. Now, it is the former I advise thee at least to, under the first Attacks of the Law, never be driven from a firm Assent to this Proposition, *Tho' my Case be Sad, yet it is not Desperate.* *3ly*, Let the Effect and Fruit of your Hope be Waiting; do not think thou art intirely cast off, because he does not presently answer your Desires, *It is good that a Man should both hope, and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord,* Lam. 3. 26. When the Lord Delays, he waits to be Gracious, and *blessed are they who wait for him,* Isa. 30. 18. Saying Grace is well worth the waiting for, *The husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the Earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain,* James 5. 7. The Seed comes not up after the first Shower, and yet the Husbandman expects another Shower; it is not ripe as soon as it grows up, but he waits for it; If thou wait on the Lord in the Way of Duty, thy Seed-time of Tears shall be Crowned with a Harvest of Joy at the End. *4ly*, Be found always in the conscientious Use of Means, in order to an Out-gate, and let Conversion rather than Comfort, Grace than Peace be thy main and great End in all Duties; for Grace is offered, and we invited to receive it, without any Qualification, but our Want of it. *5ly*, Take particular Heed to every Step of Proficiency you make toward Heaven, and acknowledge it with Gratitude; our Sense of Wants should not exclude our Sense of Mercies. *6ly*, Keep up these Things fresh on your Spirits that most affect you and warm your Hearts, till they have done their Work; Cry for a Power from God to put a Force into the Word. Dwell much on such Subjects as these; Think on the Sinfulness of Sin clothed with its sad Aggravations, what a black Picture of Hell it draws on the Soul? what a just Condemnation it has subjected thee to? Meditate on thy own particular Sins, and their hightning Circumstances, how much more vile than others; that thou has abused and slighted Means, Mercies, Judgments, Convictions, good Education, Vows, Covenants, and Engagements; and notwithstanding of these, *Departed from the living God.* Enlarge thy Thoughts on the Necessity of serious Heart-repentance, mourning for Sin, and returning to the Lord. If this be not done in the Way thou art, thou wilt speedily land at Hell, if thou die next moment, Hell must receive thee, and Heaven be for ever shut upon thee; therefore *Quickly be reconciled to God,* Matth. 5. 24. For it is impossible to prevent this Danger without Repentance, *Luke 13. 3.* — *5.* Take also a View of the Excellency, Loveliness and Worth of precious Christ in his divine Nature, Perfections and Righteousness, that God has appointed thy Sins to be pardoned upon the Account of his Righteousness, thy Nature to be renewed by his Grace, and thy Weakness and Wants supplied out of his Fullness, and has bestowed such rich, free, and full Gospel Promises, especially

especially these called *Assilate*, of first Grace, upon undeserving Sinners, as you may read in *Ezek. 36. 26. Zech. 12. 10. Phil. 1. 29. Luke 11. 13.* and the like Texts. 7th, Take care your external Employments be not Snare to you, and that either by wholly neglecting them, by which you are exposed to a Variety of bad Temptations, 'it may be fit that on Conscience first challenging, you should set apart some time from your Employments for serious and impartial Search how it stands betwixt God and you, and getting your Heart brought under such fixed Impressions, as may abide with you throw all your other Employments, but not to neglect Business altogether. Beware also lest you Overburden your selves with the Concerns of a present World, *These choke the word, and make it become unfruitful, Matth. 13. 22.* 8th, Abstain from carnal Company, profane Mockers and Strangers to Godliness, who call Faith Repentance, and Communion with God fantastical Whimsies, but choose these whose Affections are warmest, and their Zeal hottest, so being they be sound in the Faith, these who have come thorow the same Pangs of the new Birth with you, and to Experience know the *sinfulness of sin*: These will be Helpers to you in your Troubles. 9th, Keep no considerable Passages of your Condition back from the Minister God has made the Instrument of your Awakening; How seasonably might he Advise, Preach, Pray, and suitably apply himself to you? 10th, Have a main Eye on your Sincerity in the whole of your Progress, that ye seem not to appear better than you are, to get Ministers to speak Peace to you. 11th, As you find Improvements or Enlargements, labour to keep your Hearts humble, do not think, because you get Tears, that therefore God is well pleased with you, this is a Snare, this will be a slight Healing of your Wound, it will undercut and grow worse again: This undoes many thousands, *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble, James 4. 6. Humble your selves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, 1 Peter 5. 6.* Lastly, Do not rest satisfied with Convictions, till by them you be brought to embrace Jesus Christ for Righteousness and Strength, as he is offered in the Gospel, and to be Students of serious practical Holiness.

The fourth Sort of Persons I am to speak to in Improvement of this Doctrine, are such who are Strangers to these Pangs and Legal Shakings, and that either to such a Degree of them being drawn to Christ by the sweet Cords of Love, or are absolute Strangers to them.

As to the *First*, Who have been savingly wrought on by the Spirit of God, brought in by the calm Gospel-way and Love-work, tho' not with such terrible Shakings of the Law, yet with kindly Soul-melting Convictions, arising, 1. From the Surprise of the Love-offers of the Gospel made particularly to the Soul, as *Zacchaeus*, when called, *Came down and received Christ joyfully, Luke 19. 5, 6.* this was the first Step of a Saving-work; There is sometimes a Warming of the Soul by the Gospel-Discoveries of the Love of God, and the condescending Loveliness of precious Christ, which makes the Soul stand and wonder: And from these affecting Views flows, 2. A Heart-tendering Conviction of the *Sinfulness of Sin*, not so much discovered by Law-terrors, as by the Light of Gospel-love: What shall I offend so kind a God, so lovely a Christ, the Soul looks here till the Eye affect the Heart. *Zacchaeus* when he was thus converted, says, *If I have taken any thing from any man, I restore him fourfold, Luke 19. 8.*

To you who have been thus Converted, I give a few Advertisements, *First*, Often Satan makes more frequent and successful Attempts upon you, than upon some others who have been gained by greater Law-terrors, as upon *Peter*, who seems to be thus gained to Christ, *John 1. 41, 42.* *Secondly*, You may be more in the Dark for ordinary

nary in the Course of your After-life, because your Change was not so remarkable, and your Doubts may reach to razing the Foundation.

But I shall leave you with a few Advices; As 1. Beware lest because you want these Legal Shakings, you conclude you are not converted, for this should rather oblige you to love God the more, who took so tender a Way with you. 2. Let his Tenderness of you make you more tender of him and his Glory. 3. Endeavour to live within Sight of your Interest in himself, because it is so difficult to Regain when once lost. 4. Keep up a Sin-hating and Self-loathing Disposition, which will be an Antidote against Iniquities prevailing against you. 5. Live much in the Exercise of Love; let nothing satisfy you but the Lord's own Presence in Duties, go not from him without his Favour.

As to the second Sort of Strangers, *viz.* Such as are absolute Strangers, as well to these Love-methods and Alluring-measures in the Gospel, as to these more sharp Convictions of the Law, discovering their need of Christ, and perswading them to embrace him for Salvation: Your Case is sad, you are yet *in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*, for the Lord has said, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. He that believeth not is condemned already*, John 3. 3, — 18. But there be some Refuges of Lies you betake your selves to, and that I may drive you from these, and put you to your Duty, I shall Answer some *Objections* you alledge; As *First*, Some *Object*, I have no Power to do this Work, the Spirit of God must do it, who acts freely, *as the wind blows where it listeth*. Answer 1. Yet it is your Duty to labour for these Motions of the Spirit, in Order to your Conversion, tho' what is alledged be true in General, yet there are several Pieces of Duty incumbent upon you; As 1. You are obliged to frequent Ordinances and Duties, these are the Chariots wherein the Spirit conveys Grace to the Soul: The Mariner spreads his Sails to receive the Wind, because he can make no Voyage without it, but whether the Wind will fill them, so as to through his Voyage, he cannot assure himself, yet he remains in a Readiness to receive it when it blows. The sick Man waited at the Pool of Bethesda till the *Angel moved the waters*, John Chap. 5. 2. You may commend your selves and your Condition to God, by prostrate at his Foot-stool, praying him to make the *waters of the Sanctuary healing waters* to you, that he will not suffer your *Fleece to be dry when others are wet round you*, but may open your eyes to see the *wonders in his law*. 3. It is your Duty to set your selves in a grave reverent Posture in the Congregation, to stir up your selves from Sleeping and Dullness, with the Thoughts of the Greatness, Glory, and Majesty of Him with whom you have to do; Thus had *Cornelius* and his Family set themselves in a Readiness for *Peter's* Sermon, Acts 10. 24, 25, — 33. And you see how effectual it proved in the Issue, *The Holy Ghost fell on all that heard the Word*. You may call in your stragling thoughts that divert your Heart from the Business in Hand; you can command them to quite Trifles, and mind a Matter of Concern in Things External, much more should ye endeavour to do this in Matters of Eternal Salvation. 4. You may mind something of what you hear, what Judgment it passes about your Soul, it is not required thou take every Word with thee, but what most concerns or affects thee: In Order to this, when you come Home, sit down and meditate seriously on what you heard, Repeat, Confer, and Apply it, if it be a Threatning, say, *This is my Sin, This Wo is against me*; If it be a Direction, *Why should not I do thus and thus*; This is to *Commune with your own Hearts*, Psal. 4. 4. 5. Importune and desire the Prayers of others for you in your sad Case;

God may hear his own People for you, when he will not hear your selves: This Pharaoh and Simon Magus knew.

Now, when I affirm that it is your Duty to labour for the Motions of the Spirit in the Exercise of these Duties, I desire not to be mistaken, this is not to exclude the common, or sometimes the special Influence of the Spirit in producing them; neither do I go in with *Papists* and *Arminians*, who assert, If we use Nature well, and do its utmost, God is bound *ex congruo*, to give Grace, for there is no Promise in Scripture that ties God to any merely Moral or Natural Art of ours, but only to gracious Acts. But for Encouragement, Know, tho' God be not bound to any Man's Endeavours, but as free to give or deny Grace as he was before any of them, yet God seldom, if ever, has been observed to fail any in their Expectations of Grace, when they did in the Way of Means, what they by the Power of Nature could do, and the Spirit of God calls them to.

Answer 2d. The Reason why you do not these things, is not because you cannot, but because you will not: For you think ye have more Power, yet ye will not do according to your Thoughts; You presume you can Repent at another time, why do ye it not now? You do not so much as try whether you can or not: You do not daily laboriously exercise your selves to Godliness: God offers you many good Motions of Power, as *Isa. 40. 31.* but you refuse to make Use of them; God has given thee more Power than ever thou made Use of, every thing before mentioned he has put in thy Power, but yet it is left undone: Perhaps you cannot, but you are content it be so; thou cannot be Holy, and art contented it is so: We tell you by this Gospel how to come at Holiness, but you are content to remain Unclean as you are, *Jerem. 5. 31.* My people love to have it so.

Objection 2d. But ah! these things are but Natural, Moral, and Civil, I may perish for all these; For alas! I am not able to do any thing that is spiritually good, I cannot Believe, Repent, or Obey the Gospel.

Answer, Tho' this be true, yet thy Plea is no Excuse: for tho' these Duties mentioned be Natural, yet they are first before Spirituals; And if thou stop there, it is not thy want of Power, but thy want of Will hinders thee: But if thou be so sensible of thy want of Strength and Power to do what is spiritually Good, why does thou mourn over thy lost Condition? If thou cannot renew thy own Heart, should thou not go to God, and resign it to him, and cry, *Here is a proud Heart, I cannot get it humbled, a hard Heart, I cannot get it softened, Lord do it for me.* If thou find thy self Vile and Guilty, wanting Righteousness and Strength, why does thou not go to Christ, as sensible by thy own Duties, thou can never obtain Salvation, and employ and embrace him for Righteousness and Strength? This is the Way to the Remedy, and if you do it not, it is not want of Power, but want of Will, shall land you at Hell.

HE.

H E B R E W S XII. Verse 22.

But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels.

THE Apostle having from Verse 18 shewed what the Christians State under the Gospel is not, viz. Not such as it was under the Law: He in the Words read, and in Verses 23, 24. shews positively what the State to which they were called by the Gospel is, It is incomparably more Excellent in it self, and Profitable to them.

In the Words we have, 1. A Difference fixed betwixt these two States thus compared, and that by the discrete Particle, *But*. 2. A rich Display of the Glory and Excellency of the Catholick Church, as the Nature and Communion of it is revealed under the Gospel. Whereas the Church consists of two Parts, namely, that which is *Militant* on Earth, and that which is *Triumphant* in Glory; both are comprehended in this Description, the former in the Text, the latter in Verse 23.

The Privileges of the Gospel State mentioned in the Text are three; *First*, *Ye are come unto Mount Sion*. This was a Mount in *Jerusalem* that had two Heads, the one whereof was called *Moriab*, whereon the Temple was built, whereby it became the Seat of all the solemn Worship of God; and on the other was the Palace and Habitation of the Kings of the House of *David*; both typical of Christ, the one of his Priestly, the other of his Kingly Office. The Apostle does not here consider *Sion* naturally and materially, but in Opposition to Mount *Sinai* where the Law was given: God came down for a Season only on Mount *Sinai*, but in *Sion* he is said to *Dwell and make his Habitation for ever*. He appeared in Terror on Mount *Sinai*, as you heard from the preceeding Verses, but *Sion* was in *Jerusalem*, which is a Vision of Peace. He gave the Law on Mount *Sinai*, but the Gospel went forth from *Sion*, *Ila*. 2. 2, 3. He utterly forsook *Sinai* and left it under Bondage, but *Sion* he will never forsake, *it is free for ever*, *Gal*. 4. 26. And the Law on Mount *Sinai* was a heavy Yoak, whereby the People were burdened, and they were led with it to *Sion* where they waited for Deliverance from it. At first *Sion* was the Name of the Church of the *Jews* only, because there they assembled for Worship; but afterward it was a Name or Title given to the Church both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, as in the Text: And the Lord's Church and People may be called by this Name upon these Accounts, 1. Because by Nature we are like *Jerusalem*, once a Fort of the *Jehusues*, so were we once Sinners, Enemies to God, and the Devil's Fort-royal. 2. By Grace we are overcome and conquered, as *Jerusalem* was by the true *David*. 3. The Church is fortified by God for his own Use, as his chief Residence in this lower World, *like the Galleries* wherein he walks and sups with his People. 4. As *Jerusalem* was renowned above all Cities, so God's Church is now above all People and Societies in the World. 5. Because it is viewed and looked upon by all Strangers.

6. In Respect of her Laws; for as the Law and publick Worship were at *Jerusalem*, so Christ's Laws and publick Worship are maintained in the Church: Hence God is said to Love the Gates of Zion more than the Dwellings of Jacob.

The second Privilege of the Gospel-State named in the Text is, *We are come to the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*. It is not Necessary we should appropriate these two Expressions of Mount *Sion*, and the City of the living God unto distinct Things in the Gospel-State, but only consider them as distinct Expressions of the same thing; the Sum of the whole is, *We are called unto a Participation of all the Glory promised to the Church under these Names, which is far more Excellent than what the People received in and by the Law at Mount Sinai*. They came to a City, the *Israelites* received the Law in a Wilderness where they had neither Rest nor Refuge; but in a City there is Order, Defence and Safety, it is the Name of a quiet Habitation. This City is the City of God, the New Testament Church is such, in Respect God has framed and built it, none can lay Claim to any Part of it but himself; He Inhabits and Dwells in it by his gracious Presence; He Governs it; neither Pope, Prelate nor Potentate has any Share here, the Government is upon his Shoulders, and he disposes all the Members of this Society into a spiritual Incorporation, of which they are termed *Citizens*, Eph. 2. 19. and as such, he bestows upon them great Immunities and Privileges. This City is called, *The City of the living God*; this Property, *Living*, is ascribed to God, to signify he is the true and only God, he is the Omnipotent, able to keep and preserve his own City, and he is the eternal God, with whom all the believing Citizens shall live for ever. Lastly, This City is called the *Heavenly Jerusalem*; it is called *Heavenly*, because as to all its Concerns, it is not of this World, no small Part of its Inhabitants are already in Heaven; as to its State on Earth, it comes down from Heaven, Rev. 21. 2, 3. It has its Original from Divine Authority and Institution, the Inheritance of all its Inhabitants lies in Heaven, the spiritual Life they live, and all their Graces, Exercise and Experience are heavenly; yea their very Conversation is in Heaven, Phil. 3. 20. Of this blessed City Believers in the New Testament Church are Denizens and Possessors, the Rights, Privileges and Immunities of it do belong to them, which are far more Excellent than what the *Israelites* not only in the Wilderness did enjoy, but what any Saint under the Old Testament did ever Share of.

The third Privilege of the Gospel-State mentioned in the Text that Saints come to; is, *An innumerable Company of Angels*. The Apostle having declared, *we are come to the City of God*; he next shews who are the Inhabitants of that City beside themselves, and he divides them into several Sorts, as we may see in the Sequel, and the first are Angels. In the Original it is to *Myriads of Angels*, a *Myriad* is ten thousand; but when used in the Plural Number, it signifies an innumerable Company, as in the Text. The Apostle may perhaps allude to the Ministry of Angels in giving the Law, Psal. 68. 17. But this Access to Angels we now may enjoy is spiritual, the Access of the People under their Ministry upon Mount *Sinai* was Corporeal, nor had they any Communion with them thereby; but ours is spiritual, and needs no local Access to it. Whatever the idolatrous Church of *Rome* teach, we are not obliged to Pray to Angels; for tho' there be a Difference betwixt their Persons and ours in Dignity and Power, yet as to this Communion we are equal in it with them, as themselves acknowledge, Rev. 19. 10. Chap. 22. 9.

From this Text thus Explained,

Observe 1. Our Condition under the Gospel and New Testament is by far more Excellent than that which lived under the Law and Old Testament Dispensation.

Observe

Observe 2. Such who are soundly and thoroughly exercised with Legal Shakings, whatever Fears and Terrors they may for some time be filled with, yet shall at last arrive safe at Mount Zion-Consolations. These two Notes arise from the Connexion of this Text with the preceeding, implied in the discriptive Participle, *But*; importing, you shall no more stand on the Mount that burns in Fire, Blackness and Darkness; but you are come to Mount Zion.

Observe 3. The Gospel is most Splendid, Glorious and Excellent. It is set out by Mount Zion in the Text, far exceeding Mount Sinai where the Law was dispensed, and the Apostle calls it the glorious Gospel, 2 Cor. 4. 4.

Observe 4. God's Church is his principal Metropolis, and all the believing Members thereof are its Citizens, to whom its Rights, Privileges and Immunities do belong. In the Text it is called, The City of the living God, and it is dignified with the like Epithets in other Places of Scripture, as Isa. 26. 1. Chap. 62. 12. Psal. 87. 3. Psal. 46. 4.

Observe 5. The State under the Law was a State of Wrath and War, but under the Gospel it is a Jerusalem State, a Vision of Peace. Isa. 54. 13. Great shall be the Peace of thy Children.

Observe 6. The Inhabitants of the City of the living God should study to be like their Privileges, all being Heavenly, all Jerusalemites should be heavenly too.

Observe 7. Under the Gospel State it is among the great Privileges of Believers to have Communion with Angels. For, (says the Text) Ye are come to—an innumerable Company of Angels.

I return to Observe 1. Our Condition under the Gospel and New Testament is by far more Excellent than those who lived under the Law and Old Testament Dispensation.

This is evident from the whole Comparison the Apostle institutes betwixt the two States from Verse 18, to 25. But having explained from that Context, that the Ministration of the Law under the Old Testament was Earthly, Dark, and full of Terror, I shall be shorter upon the present Note.

Only the Excellency of the New Testament-Dispensation above that of the Old, may further appear if you consider, 1. That under the Law nothing was heard nor seen but the naked Commandment written in Tables of Stone, there went with it no Aptness to keep it; no Promises of Strength to enable them to do it: But under the Gospel God offers plainly sufficient Strength to perform every thing that is commanded, he works in us both to will and to do of his good Pleasure, Phil. 2. 13. We can do all through Christ strengthening us, Phil. 4. 13. 2ly, The Law had a Ministration of Death, it propounds a Curse to them that keep it not, and shews no way to avoid it; this is not because there is any ill in the Law, but it rises from the Weakness and Infirmary of the Flesh; As for Example, take a Potters Vessel, and dash it against a firm Wall, the Vessel breaks, but the Reason why the Wall is the Destruction of the Vessel, is not any Infirmary or Weakness in the Wall, for it is the Excellency of the Wall to be hard, but it is the Brittleness of the Vessel. So it is the Excellency of the Law that it is so perfect, but such is the Weakness of our corrupt Nature, as it is not able to keep it. But the Gospel Ministration is of the Spirit, not of the Letter, having a Power accompanying it enabling us to obey what is commanded; it is a Ministration of Love, not of Enmity; of Freedom, not of Bondage, of Righteousness, not of Wrath, of Life and Justification, not of Death and Condemnation: See this explained by the Apostle, 2 Cor. Chap. 3. it is written not on Tables of Stone, but on fleshy Tables of the Heart: Which imports, that as there is an outward Law laid before you, so there is a Disposition put in your Heart that

that shall answer it in all things as that of the Seal on the Wax, Letter for Letter. Again, that it is not only put into the Mind as acquired Habits are, but ingrafted as any natural Disposition is; so riveted as Letters engraven on Marble, which will continue for ever. And as to the manner of the Writing, tho' Ministers be the Pen, yet Christ Writes the Epistle, he takes the Pen, he handles and uses it, he puts the Ink in it, which is the irresistible, gracious Operation of his Spirit; we are but Co-workers with him, he holds and leads our Hands while we write this Epistle on any Man's Heart. 3ly, The Dispensation of the Gospel manifests more plainly the whole Doctrine of Religion, than ever that of the Law did; it is like the Light of the Sun shining in a dark Place. The least Saint under the Gospel may know more concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity, the Person, Natures and Offices of Christ, than the greatest Patriarch or Prophet under the Old Testament, because they are more plainly revealed. These great Objects of Faith which lay hid under the Old Testament, are clearly discovered under the New, as the Doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, 1 John 5. 7. *Matth.* 28. 19. Of the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Christ, *Luke* 1. 35. 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. Of the transcendent Love of God, the Riches of his Grace, Union with Christ, and Witness of his Spirit, 1 *John* 3. 1. *John* 3. 16. *John* 14. 20. — 24. *Rom.* 8. 16. These good Things we hope for as the Recompence of Reward, the incorruptible Inheritance, the Saints Rest in Heaven, their Conformity to, and Communion with God in Glory, were not so plainly expressed under the old Dispensation, as under the new, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5. 1 *John* 3. 2. *Heb.* 12. 23. *Rev.* Chap. 21. and 22. Yea the very Law, the Measure of our Duty is now more plainly unfolded by Christ's excellent Sermon on the Mount. 4ly, The Gospel Dispensation is attended with a more plentiful Outpouring of the Spirit of Grace; now is that Promise accomplished, *Joel* 2. 28, 29. *I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh, your Sons and your Daughters shall Prophesie, your old Men shall dream Dreams, your young Men shall see Visions, and also upon the Servants, and upon the Handmaids, in these Days will I pour out my Spirit.* Grace is freely and liberally Communicate in the Days of the Gospel to Jew and Greek, Bond and Free, Male and Female, Barbarian and Scythian, *Gal.* 3. 28. *Col.* 3. 11. The Actings of Faith, Love, Hope, and spiritual Joy are now more distinct and vigorous, than these could be before Christ was so plainly discovered. 5ly, Now the Ordinances, Promises and Threatnings of the Gospel are more Spiritual, as was more fully discoursed upon Observation third, from Verses 18, 19, 20, 21. 6ly, Under the Gospel, Saints have greater Boldness in approaching to God, *Heb.* 10. 19, 20, — 22. *Having therefore, Brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living Way, which he has consecrated for us through the vail that is to say his Flesh. — Let us draw near, — in full Assurance of Faith.* Under the Old Testament the High Priest alone and not the Israelites could enter into the Holy of Holiest, and that but once a Year upon the Day of Atonement, *Exod.* 30. 10. *Heb.* 9. 7. And then with the Blood of Beasts sacrificed for himself, and for the Errors of the People. But under the New Testament Believers are delivered from the Darkness and Terrors of Mount Sinai, and have a Right to the Comforts of Mount Zion; they may boldly every Day take a View of these things in Jesus Christ, signified by the Holy of Holiest; you may come boldly to God, and ask Pardon of Sin and Intimations of his Love, upon the Account of the Satisfaction and Mediation of our blessed Redeemer; you may boldly and expressly close with him as your Prophet, Priest and King, as your Head and Husband in the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, and Seal this Covenant in the Sacrament. You may boldly make Use of him, draw Strength, Supply

Hebrews. XII. Verse 22.

297

supply and Furniture from him suitable to all your Wants, Straits and Necessities, for he is all and in all to his People: You may boldly approach to him in private Duties, and in publick and solemn Ordinances, and own and assert, That nothing shall be able to separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. 76. The Gospel Dispensation is of greater Extent than that of the Old Testament, which was confined to the narrow Limits of the Land of Judæa, but now it is extended to all Nations without Distinction or Respect of Persons, Rom. 3. 22. — 29. — Unto all, and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yea, of the Gentiles also. Gal. 3. 14. That the blessing of Abraham may come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. Rev. 7. 9. After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all Nations, and Kindreds, and People, and Tongues, stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. 84. This Dispensation is of greater Stability and Continuance than that of the Old Testament: this is the last Administration of the Covenant after which there is not another to be expected; therefore it is called, *The everlasting Gospel*, Rev. 14. 6. and, *The everlasting Covenant*, Ezek. 16. 60, 61. There is no other Administration of the Covenant to succeed and come after it, but this and the Ordinances thereof are to endure for ever, even till Christ come again, Matt. 28. 20. 95. This Gospel Dispensation has a more excellent Confirmation, not that it is confirmed Typically, by the Blood of Bulls and Goats, but Really, by the Blood of Jesus Christ the Testator, Heb. 9. 14. — 23. The Sacraments also whereby this latter Testament is Sealed and Confirmed are better, being fewer in Number, easier in Observation, clearer in Signification, and more Spiritual, for they are accommodate to more Spiritual Help, and less Bodily Exercise, than were the former.

Use 1. Since our Lot is fallen under this better Dispensation of the New Testament let us be ashamed to be no better than the People of God who lived under the Old: Let us imitate, yea, endeavour to Out-strip them in eminent Holiness, to believe like Abraham, to be fervent Wrestlers with God like Jacob, to be Meek like Moses, Patient like Job, and Bold and Zealous like Daniel: But alas! we may be ashamed that we fall short of these Worthies, notwithstanding of all the Advantages we have of them. Surely we are obliged to be like the Administration of the Gospel-Covenant under which we live, Rom. 7. 6. But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. The Ordinances are more Spiritual, our Worship should be so: the Commands are better, our Obedience should be conforming; the Promises are better and more full, our Hope should be more firm and sure; the Threatnings more awaking and terrible, our Convictions should be suitable; we are under a clearer Discovery of the Gospel-Mystery, our Knowledge and our Boldness in approaching to God through Jesus Christ, should be the greater. How great Debtors are we to the infinite Mercy and Goodness of God, who hath given us to live under such a clear Sunshine of a Gospel Dispensation! Mat. 13. 16, 17. Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them: and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. And if we live not conform to such Obligations, we shall be highly Inexcusable.

Observe 2d. That such as are soundly and thoroughly exercised with legal Strivings, however Fears and Terrors they be filled with, yet shall at last arrive safe at Mount Zion

Consolations: You shall no more stand on the *Mount that burns in Fire, Blackness, and Darkness*, but ye are come to *Mount Zion*.

For opening this *Note*, I shall, *First*, Shew, by whom are they brought off *Mount Sinai* to *Mount Zion*? *Secondly*, How, and by what Means he brings them? *Thirdly*, Prove the Truth of the Doctrine. *Fourthly*, Give some Reasons why he brings them from *Mount Sinai* to *Mount Zion*.

First, By whom are they brought off *Mount Sinai* to *Mount Zion*? *Answer*, Our Lord Mediator seeing poor Souls on the Rack in Fear and Trembling, looks his Instructions, and finds the poor Man's Name there; he calls, Law, I answer for this Man, he is my Purchase, *Galat. 4. 5.* He redeems them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of Sons. He not only has purchased Salvation for us, but he also delivers the same to us, he being the Head of the General Assembly of the First-born, from whom the Privilege of the Blood & Right of the Inheritance is derived on us as a Stream from the Fountain, God first adopting Christ, and in him us, God has made Christ his first-born Son of his Grace by Adoption, *Psal. 89. 26, 27.* He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my Salvation. Also I will make him my First-born. — This Filiation is not that Natural Relation to God by Eternal Generation, for in that Respect neither was he made the Son of God, neither had he any Brethren, and therefore could not be called First-born: It must therefore be meant of a Primogeniture by Adoption, of which he makes them Partakers, when he brings them to *Mount Zion*, *Isa. 8. 18.* *Hebr. 2. 11, 12.* For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, wherefore he is not ashamed to call them brethren; Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren. — The Spirit of God also brings Saints to this *Mount Zion*, by discovering the Pearl of Price, and disposing the Soul to comply with the Terms of the Gospel; the trembling Soul flies like a Dove to the Hole of the Rock; and there hides it self. This leads me

Secondly, To shew by what Means the Spirit lands the People of God at this *Mount Zion*: And 1. He travels betwixt an offered Christ and a perishing bleeding Soul, tells the good News of a Remedy, and invites the Soul to accept of it, and thereon becomes the golden Tyer by which the Soul is linked to the Heart of Christ, the very Bond of our Union, for if any have not the Spirit of God, he is none of his, *Rom. 8. 9.* 2y, He brings us to *Mount Zion* by witnessing our Relation, *Rom. 8. 16.* The Spirit is self-bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God. He says the same thing with our Consciences rightly informed of their Condition, thus we are sealed by the holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory, *Ephes. 1. 13, 14.* 3y, By Agenting their Cause, interceding for them when their Title comes under Dispute, and they are like to be dragged back to *Mount Sinai* again, he helps them to write Letters of his diting to their heavenly Father, complaining of, and bemoaning their Condition, *Rom. 8. 26, 27.* The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit is self-maker intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit. — 4y, By being the Guide of their Way thither through all their Depths and Dangers, *Psal. 143. 10.* — Thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness: We are never at full Age till ripe of Glory, while we are in the Wilderness of this World, we must walk after, and be led by the Spirit of God, *Rom. 8. 7, 4, 14.*

Thirdly, I proposed to prove this Doctrine, That *Mount Sinai* shaketh to the Earth, shall resolve in *Mount Zion* Comforts; And it is evident, 1. From the Spirit's Justifying and Sanctifying

Sanctifying these who were condemned for Guilt, and stood Prisoners on the Sentence, till the Spirit makes the Soul apply to Christ, and makes Application of Christ to the Soul, so he swears and enters into Covenant with him, and he becomes his, and then, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ*: The Spirit also makes them *Partakers of the divine Nature*, by Application of the sanctifying Promises, 2 Pet. 1. 4. These are two Links of the Chain by which they are brought to Mount Zion, Rom. 8. 30. 2ly, The Spirit also works so much Persuasion of the Love of God, as encourageth the Soul to lay hold on Mount Zion Comforts, the Gospel Promises, to lay Claim to them, and venture their Soul on them. Yet it is to be acknowledged, tho' the Saints be arrived at Mount Zion Comforts, these are not at all times alike to them; great Sins and great Troubles sometimes returns them to some Degrees of their former Shakings, and blots their Evidences, Psal. 51. 11, 12. A Child having offended may not call Father while the Guilt is uncovered: Saints may be come to Mount Zion, and yet not assured, neither dare confidently take these Comforts as theirs: There remains a Mixture of Trembling and Doubting, which is lightened by Obstructions put in their way by Satan and their own Hearts: A Believer, for any thing I know, may be in Doubt if he be come to Mount Zion, till he land at the Mount of Myrrhe above; But if thy Soul be carried out after Holiness, and Obedience to God, by the secret Seed of God within, by the New Creature prompting thereto, sure thou shalt be landed at Mount Zion. 3ly, The Doctrine is evident from the Promises by which God has obliged himself to give his poor broken-hearted People Comfort, John 16. 22. *And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice*, — Isa. 57. 15. *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy Place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones*. Psal. 126. 5. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy*. The same Spirit which convinceth of sin becomes a Comforter to the Lord's People. 4ly, Our blessed Redeemer is given, sent, and anointed for this very End, to Comfort them that mourn, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness, Isa. 61. 2, 3. No doubt he will be faithful in discharging this Trust. 5ly, This is the Lord's Design when he awakens his People by the Sound of the Trumpet and terrible Alarms of the Law, in this Method to bring them to the Comforts of Mount Zion, these are usual Prologues to his People of Comfort and Peace, and prepares them to receive and prize the same, Hos. 2. 14. *I will allure her and bring her to the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her*. He caused Light to shine out of Darkness at first, and out of Godly Sorrow he brings solid spiritual Comfort. 6ly, There be many Duties which the Lord expects of his People, which they cannot perform, while tossed among these Waves of the Terrors of the Law, till they be safe landed at Mount Zion. Love cannot be so strong, and active till the Soul be made to taste of Mount Zion Comforts, and have the Love of God shed abroad in the Heart. Joy in the Holy Ghost cannot be so solid and lasting, the Soul may indeed have some Sprinklings of Hope from general Promises, yet nothing to what particular Assurance giveth; this is full Joy, John 15. 11. *and full of Glory*, 1 Peter 1. 8. And good Reason for it, for the joy of the Lord is our strength, Nehem. 8. 10. It strengthens to perform Duty and endure the Cross. Neither can Gratitude flow so high without the Springs of these Comforts, common Mercies and Favours may procure a common Sense of God's Goodness, but Thankfulness is never so large as when feeding on Gospel Comforts; these make the Soul say, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits towards me? I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord*, Psal.

Psal. 124. 16. 17. These Comforts make the Soul cheerfully to deny all, and cheerfully suffer for Christ.

Fourthly, I proposed to give some Reasons, *Why such who are soundly exercised with the Errors of the Law, shall be brought to the Comforts of Adams Sin.* And *First*, Because, if otherways Religion would be an uncomfortable thing, would very little allure those who are without; they would be prejudicate at it, as that would rob them of all their Comforts, therefore the Lord brings Joy out of Sorrow, and clothes his People with the Garments of Joy for the Spirit of Humility. *2dly*, To keep the Hearts of his People from fainting, dwell they any longer on *Adams Sin*, they would sink, Soul-troubles would overwhelm their Spirits, *Psal. 142. 9.* Without a Cordial they are gone, *Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction, Psal. 119. 92.* *3dly*, To confute these hard thoughts they had of God while on *Adams Sin*; when crying, *How long wilt thou forget me for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? Is his mercy clean gone? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* *Psal. 77. 2, 3.* Now he is concerned to bring them out of these Waters of *Adams Sin* to the Comforts of *Adams Sin*, that they may confess, — *This is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High, Psal. 77. 10.* *4thly*, To let the World see it is not in vain to serve the Lord, he will abundantly compensate all their Pains and Care, with Peace of Conscience, Assurance of Love, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, as part of their Wages in this Life, and eternal Glory in the Life to come. *5thly*, To draw a Vail over all created Comforts, they esteem God's Favour preferable to them all, *Lord lift up the light of thy countenance upon me, thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased, Psal. 4. 6, 7.* Yea, sometimes they care for living no longer when so richly possessed of these Comforts, they are ready to say with old *Simon*, *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Luke 2. 29.* *6thly*, Because he delights to see them feeding on the first fruits of the Land of Promise, on the Grapes from *Eden*, he would gladly see them at a sweet Repast on their Way, he would not see them as a Master would see a Servant, a cruel Man a Beggar, or a Conqueror a Captive; but as a Father would see a Child, or a Husband a Wife, *Song 2. 14.* *O my dove, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* *Joseph* could not hear the Misapprehensions his Brethren had of him, *My Lord*, and, *Thy Servant*, he thought were strange. Titles among Brethren, he longed to hear them call him by a name of Relation, so saith God to his People, *I will give her vineyards from *Eden*, and the valley of *Achor* for a door of hope, — And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me *Ishtar*; and shalt call me no more *Baal*, Ho. 2. 15, 16.* *Thou shalt call me, not by the strange name of a Lord, but by the familiar Relation of a Husband.*

Observe 2d. That the Gospel is a most glorious, splendid and excellent Thing; it is set forth by *Adams Sin* in the Text, far transcending the Law on *Adams Sin*; hence it is called, *The glorious Gospel, 2: Cor. 4. 4.*

To prepare this Doctrine for our Use, I shall, *First*, Prove the Truth of it. *2dly*, Shew in what respects the Gospel is so glorious.

As to the *First*, The Truth of the Doctrine is evident from these Things which are spoken of *Sin* in Scripture, which clearly point out the Glory of the Gospel, it being a Type and Emblem thereof. Thus *Sin* is called *Gala Habitation*, *Psal. 9. 17.* *Psal. 76. 2.* and this must needs be Glorious. It is the Seat of the Throne, Reign and Kingdom of Christ, *Psal. 2. 6.* *Mat. 4. 7.* It is the Object of innumerable divine Promises, *Psal. 69. 35.*

Heb. 1. 27. Heb. 12. 29. It was the Object of God's Special Love, and the Place of the Birth of the Elect, *Psal. 87. 2. — 5. The Joy of the whole Earth, Psal. 48. 2. Salvation and all Blessings came out of it, Psal. 124. 7. Psal. 110. 2. Psal. 128. 5.* These and many other like glorious Promises did belong to it, which were not spoken of, nor accomplished in Mount Zion, which was in Jerusalem absolutely, but only as it was Typical of the State, Splendor and Glory of the Gospel, and Privileges thereof, to be enjoyed by Believers; all Privileges ascribed, all the Promises made to it see theirs, this is imported in that Expression in the Text, *But ye are come to Mount Zion.* That is, ye are interested in all the Promises of God, recorded in Scripture made unto Zion, in all the Love and Care of God expressed toward it, in all the special Glories assigned to it. So much for Proof of the Doctrine.

Secondly, I am to shew in what Respects the Gospel here shadowed out by Sinai is glorious; And it is so, whether you consider it Comparatively or Absolutely. First, Comparatively. If compared with the Law, it excels it very far, tho' the Law was glorious, yet nothing in respect of this Gospel; and that either, 1. In respect of the Light and Perspicuity of it, the former is obscure, wrapt up under many Ceremonies and mysterious Sacrifices; But in this latter Christ is seen, heard and handled, the Mystery of the Gospel long hid is opened, and we behold as with open face the Glory of the Lord. Or, 2. In respect of Easiness and Sweetness, the former Commands were many and painful, no Help to do them, but here Christ's Father to assist, carrying sweet Promises of Assistance, as *Golden Cords make the Wholesome*, hence called *Sweet Promises*, and *A Sweet Yoke*, *Heb. 12. 19. Chap. 8. 6.*

Next, The Gospel is Glorious if considered absolutely in it self, and this is evident, 1. From the noble Epithets and Designations the Spirit of God gives to it; it is called, *The Word of Reconciliation*, *2 Cor. 5. 19.* because it sets out the Way how, and Terms on which Rebels may be at Peace with God. It is the Gospel of *the Grace of God*, *Acts 20. 24.* because there the Freedom and Riches of his Grace and Favor in giving Christ for Sinners appears; and it is the Means whereby God works Grace, *Rom. 10. 17.* yea whereby he creates and perfects it. It is the Gospel of Peace, *Eph. 2. 17.* It is called *the Gospel of the Kingdom*, *Matth. 24. 14.* for it points out the Way to the Kingdom, it prepares for the Kingdom, it contains all the Laws, Ordinances and Customs of the Kingdom; it enriches all the Subjects of the Kingdom, and brings with it all the Privileges and Immunities of the Kingdom of Grace here, and of Glory hereafter. It is called *the Word of Life*, *Phil. 2. 16.* because it shows who bring Life, by the help of the Spirit it works Life in us, *we bear the Price of the Son of God, and live.* Hereby Life is preserved in us; and all who embrace the Offers of this Gospel, shall be brought to eternal Life. It is also called *the Power of God unto Salvation*, *Rom. 1. 16;* that is, a mighty and glorious Mean of God's saving Power. It is called *the joyful Sound*, *Psal. 89. 15.* *The Law was a Sound of Fear and Terror*, but *this is the Sound of the great Jubilee*, to proclaim Liberty from Sin, Satan, Hell and Woe. It is also called *the Word of Faith*, *Rom. 10. 8.* for it presents the Object before the Soul; it opens your Eyes to see this Object, and it gives an Hand to take hold thereof. And finally, This Gospel proclaims the unspeakable Rights of Christ, *Eph. 3. 6.* It discovers where Riches are to be found, it shews the Nature of his Riches, both of Grace and Glory, and makes all that receive them spiritually and gloriously Rich, were they never so Poor. *Ab.* That our Mount Zion; this Gospel to which we are now in exceeding Glorious, is further evident from the glorious Subject it Treats of and makes manifest to us. Now the first and

and chief Subject is the glorious God, subsisting in the Persons of the ever blessed Trinitie; God the Father he has greated his Glory in his rich Bounty to perishing Men: For whatever Relief and saving Benefit they receive in this, or have the Promise of in the World to come, the Gospel ascribes it in the first Place to God the Father, *John 3. 16. God so loved the World, that he gave his own only begotten Son*; this Gift was such as became the State of a King to raise our Thoughts. Let us consider, 1. What he gave and parted with to and for us, his choicest Jewell and best Treasure; had it been a Saint or *Stephen*, the Father had been unspeakably considering what we were; but his Son, only and beloved, who lay in his Bosom, this heightens it to a Wonder! 2. Whither sent he this his dear Son, and wherefore? *He sent him into the World*, into a strange Country where he was not known, amongst Enemies who hated him, to be abused, vilified, spit upon, to be despised and rejected of Men, yea and to pour out his Soul unto Death, *Isa. 53. 12.* For whose sake he sent him to do all this, was it for Friends to whom he was obliged? Or was it for his near Relations, or for some worthy deserving Creature who merited such a Favour? No, it was for such as deserved nothing but Hell and Wrath! 4. What was his glorious Design in all this, it was to make Peace, *God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself*, to espouse and marry to himself a Bride by Nature black as Hell, to make Way for a gracious and legal Pardon to Rebels, to bestow the Blessing of Adoption upon them, and to purchase a Kingdom for them. 2dly. On this Account *Sion* of the Gospel is displayed the Glory of God the Son as well as of the Father. Here we have a View of his glorious Person, the Son of God, yet co-eternal with God, begotten by, yet equal and the same with the Father. Of his glorious Offices suited to all our Necessities; are we Blind, he leads us, as a Prophet, *the blind in a way they know not*; are we guilty and liable to Wrath, he purchases Peace, Pardon and Reconciliation as the High Priest of our Profession; are we under the Power of Sin, he makes us willingly to yield to his Obedience, and subdues our Lusts under us by his Kingly Power: From these Offices flow all the Promises as Streams from the Fountain; from his Prophetic Office Promises of Illumination, Counsel and Direction; from his Priestly Office Promises of Reconciliation, Pardon and Acceptance; and from his Kingly Office, Promises of converting, encreasing and strengthening Grace. Here we see his unparalleled Love in giving himself to the Death for us the vilest of Wretches; and here we may view his unsearchable Fullness communicable to all his Saints, to strengthen the Weak, to cure the Diseased, to upraise the Scourge, to recover the Decayed, to comfort the Comfortless, and to relieve the Oppressed. 3dly. On this Account *Sion* we see the Glory of the Holy Ghost in his excellent Work Office and Operations for uniting us to God, and effectual applying the Purchase of Christ to our Souls, which is begun by convincing us of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment, *John 16. 8, 9.* persuading us of our lost Condition, and of the Necessity of the Remedy provided by our blessed Lord Jesus. It is carried on by the Work of Conversion, whereby the Sinner is made quite another Man, a new Man, new and gracious Qualities are infused, which make the Proud humble, the Unclean chaste, the Hardened soft, the Impatient bear all things, the Covetous liberal, the Wounded whole, the Blind to see, the Deaf to hear the Voice of Christ, and the Lame to run in his Way: And this Work of Grace is advanced in the Soul till it come to Perfection by the Spirit's gracious assisting us to mortify Sin, by implanting the Habits of Grace, by watering and firing them up to Exorcise, by strengthening us to every commanded Duty, and comforting under all Discouragements.

A second Part of the Subject of this Gospel that makes it so Glorious, are the rich and noble Offers and Tenders made therein to the Sons of Men; of Repentance, Pardon, Peace, perfect Righteousness; and in short, the great God makes Tender of himself, of his Christ, the Pearl of Price with all his Benefits, of his Spirit with all his Blessings, as a Well of Water springing up to eternal Life, and of his Kingdom a Crown of endless Glory; he Offers all these to rebel Sinners, sincerely, affectionately and importunately; upon Condition that you abandon all Sin and Idols, that you dedicate your selves to the Lord, and accept of the blessed Jesus for Righteousness and Strength, as your alone Saviour, and Redeemer. 3. This Gospel is Glorious in Respect of the rare and excellent Fruits and Effects following on Souls accepting of, and complying with these Offers on the Terms on which the Gospel proposes them; as, 1. Upon this all the Enmity betwixt God and the Soul shall be removed, Rom. 5. 1. Eph. 2. 14. 2. Peace with Conscience, witnessing that there is no Condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. 3. Sweet Harmony and Tranquillity in all the Faculties of the Soul; they do not fight as formerly one against the other, the Conscience drawing one way, and the Will another, the Judgment convinced in some Measure, as Balaam's, who cried out, God's Ways were best, How goodly are thy Tent, O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles, O Israel? And yet his Affections were for Sin, for he loved the Wages of Unrighteousness. But when the Man has accepted the Offers of Grace, all the Faculties sweetly center to advance God's Glory, and our Souls Salvation. 4. Hence follows much spiritual divine Joy, 1 Pet. 1. 8. — In whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. This is a Christians Feast upon Earth, a Foretaste of the Joys of Heaven, which makes you long for the full Enjoyment of them. 5. And hence we have a free Access by one Spirit to the Father, Eph. 2. 18. A blessed Trade and Correspondence is opened betwixt the Soul and Heaven when reconciled through Christ: We may pour out our Complaints before him, fill our Mouths with Arguments, and he will fill our Souls with such Supplies of Grace as are needful for us.

Fourthly, The Gospel is Glorious in Respect of the precious Promises therein contained given through Christ to Believers, which may appear to be Glorious and Excellent, if we consider, 1. Their Date from Eternity, Time 1. 2. 3. In hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the World began. 2. The Procurer of them, they are purchased by the Blood of Christ, he has redeemed us from the Curse, and procured for us the Blessing, Gal. 3. 13, 14. The Promises in him are all yea and amen unto the Glory of God, 2 Cor. 1. 20. From his Offices the Promises flow as so many Streams from a Fountain, from his Prophetick Office flow the Promises of Illumination, Counsel and Direction; from his Priestly Office Promises of Reconciliation, Pardon and Acceptation; and from his Kingly Office these of converting, encreasing, strengthening and supporting Grace. 3. Look to their Freeness, they proceed all from pure Grace and Favour, they are all given without Money, and without Price, Isa. 55. 1. 4. To their Fulness, the Lord promises to be our God, Jer. 32. 38. this is comprehensive of all Mercies, his Attributes are for our Good, Power to protect us, Mercy to spare, Wisdom to direct, and his All-sufficiency to provide for us; his Word to be our Guide, his Angels to be our Guardian, his Son to be our Saviour, and his Spirit to be our Sanctifier; this is a Part and Portion can never be spent; the Promises are a rich Ring of Gold, but this is the Diamond in the Ring, the Crown and Top-excellency in them all. 5. How seasonable and suitable are these Promises they bring with them; Rest to the Weary, Food to the Hungry, Clothes to the Naked, Pardon to the Guilty, Liberty to the Captive, Sight

Sight to the Blind, Strength to the Weak, and Gold to the Poor. 6. These are stable and firm, *Yea and Amen in Christ, the Covenant is ordered in all things and sure.* 7. These Promises are fringed with something to answer all the Objections of convinced Sinners: As if it be Objected, 1. I am vile, mine Iniquities are as the hair of my Head, is there any Promise for such a Monster? Answer, Yea there is, *Ua. 1. 18. Come let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow; though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as White.* Objection 2. But God is my Enemy, I may say with Job, Chap. 6. 4. *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poison whereby I am pierced on my Spirit; the Terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.* Answer, That Storm is over in Christ's Blood, and their Shadows are fled away, *Jer. 3. 12. Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine Anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord God, and I will not keep Anger for ever.* Objection 3. Alas, but I am ignorant of God and Christ, and therefore Who belongs to me. Answer, Has he not promised to reach Sinners in the Way, *Plal. 25. 5. To lead the Blind in a way they know not, to make Darkness Light, bitter Sweet, and crooked things straight.* *Isa. 42. 16.* Objection 4. But my Heart is obscured, I cannot mourn. Answer, The Lord has promised, *— Ye shall seek your hearts in your own light, for all your Evils that ye have committed, Ezek. 20. 42. A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and give you a Heart of Flesh.* Plead therefore with the Lord for the Performance of these Promises. Objection 5. But I cannot get it thought there is Mercy for me. For answer, Look to what the Lord says, *Ua. 55. 7, 8, 9. Let the wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts: and let him return to the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly Pardon. For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts, neither are your Ways my Ways, saith the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts higher than your Thoughts. Even tho' ye have backslidden from him, if ye return as penitent People, he will heal your Backslidings, and love you freely,* *Isa. 54. 4.* Objection 6. But I find Sin is too hard for me, I will fall by it, Satan is too cunning and potent for me, I am not able to resist him. Answer, It is promised, *He will subdue our Iniquities,* *Micah 7. 19. Sin shall not have dominion over you, Rom. 6. 14.* And tho' Satan be cunning and strong, yet Grace is sufficient for thee, the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your Feet shortly, *Rom. 16. 20.* Objection 7. I fear a Storm of Persecution, and that then I may faint, succumb and deny Christ. Answer, Be not afraid, it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you, *Matth. 10. 19, 20. I will put my fear in their Hearts, that they shall not depart from me, Jer. 32. 40. None shall pluck you out of his Hand, John 10. 28.*

Use 1. Is the Gospel (set out by Mount Zion, the Beauty of the whole Earth) so Glorious and Excellent, then it informs us, 1. Of the Reason why the Devil is so implacable an Enemy to it, and uses all Means to prevent its Glory shining into our Hearts, *1 Cor. 4. 3, 4.* He is an implacable Enemy to Mankind, being excluded from the Offices of the Gospel himself, envies Man's being brought to a lively Hope by the preaching of the Gospel while he lies under such absolute Despair; he knows if he can keep Man ignorant of the glorious Mysteries of the Gospel, he has them fast enough in his Chains, Profess as they will, Read, Pray or Hear as they will: He knows that by the Gospel his Kingdom is in Hazard of falling, by this *Darkness* is brought from *Darkness* to *Light*, and from the Power of *Satan* unto *God*, and therefore he opposes it: 2d, Hence

be informed what a rich Blessing God has bestowed on this covenanted Land; many richer and greater Nations are deprived of this, and know no other *Apostles and Teachers* but Sun, Moon and Stars, and we in the outmost Parts of the Earth are favoured with this invaluable Mercy, *O bless the Lord!* 39. What a Variety of Motives may be hence inferred to prevail with all to believe, obey and prize this Gospel as our chiefest Jewel, allow your selves no Rest till ye behold in this Glass more of his Glory, till by its reflex Rays it change you into the same Image, from Glory to Glory as by the Spirit of the Lord, that you may be burning and shining Lights before others, that you may live in Joy and Comfort of it your selves, and that you may approve your selves Wisdom's Children, by contending earnestly for the Faith, by holding it fast in Spight of all its Opposers, and by justifying and standing by and for this glorious Gospel held forth in the Word of God in the worst of Times.

Use 2. Of Conviction to such who have never seen the Glory of this Gospel, who despise its Offers, and care for none of these things. That I may speak home to your Consciences on this Head, I shall, 1. Shew what hinders you from getting Discoveries of this Gospel Glory. 2. Some Aggravations of your Guilt and Misery. 3. Some Considerations for your Conviction.

First, I am to shew what hinders many People from Discoveries of the Glory of this Gospel; and 1. Gross Ignorance, many know not of any such excellent Thing; if ye knew the Gift of God, ye would ask for it, John 4. 10. *They who know God's Name, will put their Trust in him;* Psal. 9. 10. Knowledge begets Love, and Love makes painful and solicitous in Order to further Discoveries: But Ignorance cries out, *Who is the Lord that I should obey him? What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, that thou does thus charge us?* 2. That Root of Unbelief that grows in every carnal Heart, Men believe not the great Truths of the Gospel, the things of the invisible World, the Glory to be revealed, or Misery that is threatened, the Necessity of Faith and Holiness, and the like important Truths. 3. That general Unconcernedness that prevails with Men about Matters of Salvation and endless Eternity, *Gallies care for none of these things, they put far from them the evil day,* Things at Distance affect them not, the Report of a Gun we hear without concern, but the same set to our Breast and discharged would make us tremble; Consideration would break the Force of Lust, and spoil Satan of his Design, would ye stake and pawn precious Souls for every base Lust, if ye believed Death and Eternity so near, and that you must quickly give account to your Creator of all things done in the body. 4. The Unfutulness betwixt the glorious Things of the Gospel, and the Temper of a Sinner, Christ's Yoke does not fit a carnal Heart, Matth. 16. 23. *They savour not the things that be of God,* a Rattle or any Toy will please a Child better than a Crown, The carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, Rom. 8. 7. And hence it is they make light of the Offers of the glorious Gospel, Matth. 22. 5. 5. They are deceived and cheated by Satan and their own Hearts, the Devil vails Sin with a gilded Vizard, that Man cannot see there is a lie in his right hand, Isa. 44. 20. and thus is plunged into an Abyss of Misery.

Secondly, For your Conviction, who despise the precious Offers of this Gospel, I shall set before you some Aggravations of your Guilt. As 1. It is the height of Dissimulation, we deal not with God as we would have him deal with us, when we want any Mercy from him, we would be heard at first Call, *Heal me now* cries Miriam, *Make haste to help me* says David, Psal. 70. 1. *Answer me speedily,* Psal. 102. 2. But when God calls by the Gospel, *This is my Beloved, hear ye him,* embrace him and his Offers, *Cleanse your hands*

bands ye sinners, purifie your hearts ye double-minded, more for your fault, than them to the moles, and to the bats. Ye return for Answer, I will hear thee at a more convenient Season.
 2. This is even-down Rebellion, a positive Nay-say, flat Disobedience, and fighting the divine Authority, the Season is as much a part of Command, as the Thing commanded, if God call, *Return ye now every one from his evil way.* Jerem. 18. 11. the Now is as much a Duty as the Returning. 3. It is the basest Ingratitude, Christ did not adjourn his Love to us one Day, his Heart was to us from everlasting, before the Earth was, he rejoined in the habitable parts of the Earth, and his Delights were with the Sons of Man, Prov. 8. 31. 4. This your Refusal is the height of Ingratitude, a fraudulent and deceitful detaining of Christ's Right, ye profess your selves to be his, and yet neither serve him nor obey his Calls, to delay which but one Day, is to deny him his Right, for ye and your All is his. 5. It is most unreasonable, no Man living can give a Reason to excuse himself from obeying the Call of this glorious Gospel: Dare ye say, *It is needless, dangerous, fruitless, useless, or impossible;* Nay, you cannot but say the contrary, *That your Obedience is necessary, gainful, fruitful, useful, and possible.* 6. It is the greatest of Madriess to refuse Heaven, because ye will not be Holy, rather to lose the eternal Enjoyment of God than be made like to him, to choose the Curse and refuse the Blessing, to welcome Misery and despise eternal Happiness. To prevent thus your Ruine, (if possible) I shall add,

Thirdly, Some Considerations for your Conviction, and for perswading you to hearken to the Voice of this glorious Gospel. As 1. What will ye answer to God for contemning this Gospel? Believe ye there is such a Day coming when he will sit in Judgment on every Soul, and ye will be arraigned, and condemned for this your non-such Guilt? Acts 17. 31. If ye believe not this you are Atheists, if ye do believe, what do ye think the Business of that Day will be? Will it not be in the first place to take Account how ye and I have heard and obeyed the Calls of this glorious Gospel? Whether we complied with its Terms? How then will ye answer in that dreadful Day? Will ye say ye were not called to embrace Christ? Nay, this ye dare not, for, beside other Calls you had by your Education, Instruction, Counsel, Correction and Example, the very Timber and Stones of this House, the Angels present at these Assemblies, your Fellow-hearers and your own Consciences will bear Witness against you. Will ye have to say ye were too young to hearken to the Voice? Ye cannot alledge this, for others younger than you have done it, beside, ye are to seek first the kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 6. 33. to remember your Creator in the days of your youth, Eccles. 12. 1. Or, had ye present Concerns necessary to be preferred? Nay, this is your one thing needful; beside, God has made a Promise of other things to be added to you, *Amos. 6. 33. 1 Tim. 4. 8.* Or, will ye pretend for Excuse you expected longer time in the World for this Work? No, it was a present Now was promised you and no further, and who would not then do it, neither would they, had they lived a Methuselah's Age; therefore your Mouth shall be stopped, and ye shall be left Speechless without Excuse, *Math. 22. 12.* if ye continue to refuse to hearken to the Call of this glorious Gospel. 2. Consider, if ye accept not the Offer of Christ, ye must bear his Wrath, the Vengeance of his Gospel will light on you, and that is more fearful than the Curses of the Law; this begins in this Life, in giving you up to your own Hearts Lusts, *Psal. 84. 11, 12.* which is the outmost of Wrath, when a Man sits and hears Christ offered, and yet cannot obey the Call; and this Wrath is completed in the Life to come, when eternal Vengeance is poured out on the Soul, which will make you cry for Mountains to fall on you and cover you from the wrath of the

the Lamb, Revel. 6. 16. Where will ye lay the Blame of your Destruction, ye dare not charge God with it, for he so loveth the World as to give his own Son to redeem you; nor Christ, for he would he have gathered you and ye would not; nor the Spirit, for he knocked at the Doors of your Hearts, for your Conviction and Conversion, but ye resisted and quenched his Motions; nor poor Ministers, for they set before you Life and Death, the Danger of Sin and the Necessity of Holiness, but ye would not believe their Report: So that ye must go in to Eternity with that as your Motto graven on your Fore-heads, *Noses 1. 3. 91. Thus hath destroyed thy self, and there is no Remedy, no Method to prevent this, but to accept of Christ for Righteousness and Strength; as he is offered in the Gospel.*

Use 3d. For Trial, If ye have yet seen the Glory of this Gospel, Are ye come to Mount Zion, and seen the Glory that shines forth there? Try it by these Evidences, of which some are Preparatory to these Discoveries, others are Evidential thereof: There be three things Preparatory, without which no Discovery of the Gospel-Glory, First, The Mind must be enlightened, Spiritual Things cannot be discerned by natural Light, 1 Cor. 2. 14. God in Christ and the Mysteries of the Kingdom cannot be discerned but by supernatural Light, Psal. 36. 9. In thy Light shall we see Light. 2ly, Conscience must be convinced, we must be upon Mount Sinai before we come to Mount Zion; you must be convinced of Sin, a Light set up to see it: as dishonouring to God, and defiling to the Soul; till this be set home by the Spirit of God, Man never sees his Condition, nor considers his Duty; but when *pricked at the Heart*, then he cries out, *What must I do to be saved?* You must be convinced of Righteousness, else the Work will misgive, the Spirit would not only be a Spirit of Bondage, but of Despair; you must see your need of the Righteousness of Christ; when a Man is Sick, it is easie to perswade him of his need of Physicians; when you are lost and undone in your own Eyes, and have experienced the Insufficiency and Emptiness of all other Remedies, then shall ye know the Sufficiency of Christ, *They shall know that I am the Lord, when all helpers shall be destroyed*, Ezek. 30. 8. and you must see the Fulness of Christ's Righteousness, it is enough to save the greatest and vilest Sinners that lay hold on it; it is Infinite, so that no Sin can exceed it; and it is Everlasting, so that no Sin can consume it. And, you must be convinced of Judgment, else all the rest are in vain; the Work of Sanctification and Grace must be advanced in the Believer, for the Office of the Spirit here, is to carry on the Work of Conviction, so as to put Honour on Jesus Christ in all his Offices; in Convincing of Sin, he puts Honour on him as a Prophet; of Righteousness, as a Priest dying for Sin; and in Condemning of Judgment, he puts Honour on him as a King, renewing and working Grace in the Heart, *A bruised reed he will not break, a smoking flax he shall not quench, until he hath brought forth Judgment and Victory*, Matth. 12. 20. That is, the Lord will nourish and cherish weak Grace, until such Souls shall be made perfect in Faith and Holiness, and shall have got Victory over all their Unbelief, Lusts and Corruptions; you must not only be convinced of the need of the Blood of Christ to take away the Guilt of Sin, but also of the Grace of Christ to renew your Hearts, and make you fit for Glory. 3ly, The Will must be inclined to take Christ, to embrace him, and accept of him as our only Lord and Saviour; no part in Man is so vitiate by the Fall as the Will, the Dictates thereof, before Conversion, are, *Israel would have none of me, they would not have me to reign over them*, Luke 19. 27. *Ye will not come to me that ye may have Life*, John 5. 40. The All-conquering Arm of Jehovah's Power must put Faith it self to subdue this, and make it subject to the Will and Laws of Christ. Now, when the Mind

is so Enlightned, the Conscience thus convinced, and the Will determined to accept of Christ, the Man may be presumed to have got some Sight of the Glory of the Gospel. Yet try by some further Evidences, as 1. This Sight has put you to Walk by, and Act from Gospel Principles; it is not Actions or Performances materially God so much notices, as the Principles whence they flow. Now, these who are come to Mount Sion, and have beheld the Glory of the Gospel, are acted by these noble Principles of Faith, Love, and Self-denial. 1. Faith, without this it is impossible to please God, Hebr. 11. 6. By this we embrace the Call of the Gospel, resigning our selves to the Lord on his own Terms; By this we live up to the Rule of the Gospel, which directs us to have a Conscience void of offence toward God and man; Hence we are said to live by Faith, and to walk by Faith, Gal. 2. 20. 2 Cor. 5. 7. A second Principle is Love, without which the former is deficient, for it works by Love, Galat. 5. 6. This is a matchless Principle, the Substance of Religion is wrapt up in it, for it prefers and values Christ above all, it throws up the everlasting Doors to let him in, it is Liberal to give all to him, it is Laborious and Painful, ay at work, sets all the Wheels of the Soul in Motion; it is a Labour of Love, if any thing keep a Man close to God in Duty, it is Love; this will spend and be spent for him; this commands and sways the Heart, every Man is acted by the Power of Love; it is that gives him Dominion in the Soul; it is that gives Christ and Grace supreme Rule and Throne in the Heart; and this is a lasting Principle, it never faileth, it is sure to hold out and persevere to the End; a Believer is acted by some Principles here, that shall cease in Heaven; but Love shall never cease to endless Eternity. A third influencing Principle is Self-denial, this is an essential Part of our Sanctification, Rom. 14. 7. None of us liveth to himself; Self-opinion, Will, Love, Confidence, all must be denyed, every Imagination, and every high thing that exalts it self against the knowledge of God, must be brought into captivity, 1 Cor. 10. 5. A second Evidence, This Sight of the Gospel Glory has brought you to taste in Experience of the noble Provisions, high Fare, and rich Delicacies held out there to feast your Soul with; ye have Meat to eat the World knows not of, Strangers intermeddle not with hidden Manna, Angels Food, Bread from Heaven, the Fruit of the Tree of Life, that grows in the midst of the Paradise of God; Ye need not now go to the World, to Creatures to draw out of their Cisterns, here with Joy draw Water out of these Wells of Salvation, a Draught of the pure River of the Water of Life, clear as Crystal, which proceeds out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb. 3ly, Try what Estimate ye put on these Discoveries ye get on Mount Sion; Do ye place your chiefest Happiness in them? A God, a Christ disclosed in glorious Perfections and Excellencies; Are not these preferred to your chiefest Joy? Are they not the Head and Crown of your Delights? Let the World take Corn, Wine, and Oyl, you reckon his Presence a Supply sufficient to all your Wants, better than Friends, Children, Riches, and Honours. 4ly, When he brings such Provisions to you, what Entertainment give ye him? I will tell you what he delights in, and if ye have seen his Glory in the Gospel, ye will not let him want it, and that is an humble, broken and upright Heart, Isa. 57. 15. Chap. 66. 2. 5ly, Do ye allow him your Company? Like ye to be ay in his Presence? Are your Minds with him by sweet Thoughts of him, Psal. 139. 17, 18. Are your Wills, Hearts, and Inclinations set upon him? the Bent and Tendency of them upwards? the Byals of them Heavenward? Are your Affections on him, as the most lovely, delightful and desirable Object, Psal. 73. 23, — 25? Are ye with him in your Dayly Conversation, ordering it so as it be, walking with God like Enoch and Noah, Gen. 5. 22. Chap. 6. 9? Does nothing satisfy you without ye see him and enjoy him in all? If upon impartial and accurate

accurate Search you find these Evidences in your own Experience, then may ye conclude ye have seen the *Glory* of this Gospel, ye are come to *Mount Sion*, and have seen the *Glory* of God shining there. I go to

Observe 4th God's Church is his principal Metropolis, and all the believing Members thereof are its Citizens, to whom its Rights, Privileges and Immunities do belong. This Doctrine is evident from the Text, *Ye are come to Mount Sion, to the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*: And may be further confirmed from parallel Places, as *Psal. 87. 3. Isa. 26. 1. Chap. 66. 12.*

To prepare this Note for your Use, I shall speak, 1. Of the Nature of this City: 2. Of its Trade: 3. Of its Government. 4. Of its Privileges. 5. Of its Glory, Greatness and Splendor beyond all other Cities.

I begin with the first, and concerning the Nature of this City we may Remark, 1. The common Notion of a City is, a Place built by Men for People to Inhabit or Dwell in. This in the Text is God's own Habitation, *Psal. 132. 14. This is my Rest, here will I dwell, for I have desired it.* Eph. 2. 22. *In whom you also are built up together for an Habitation of God through the Spirit.* 2ly, A City is a Place of Safety and Security, being compassed with Walls for the Defence of its Inhabitants; so is the Church, this City of the living God, *Isa. 26. 1. We have a strong City, Salvation will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks*; the Walls for the Churches Defence are Excellent beyond Parallel; God himself in an extraordinary Manner is a Wall of Fire round about her, and the Glory in the midst of her, *Zech. 2. 5. all his Attributes are a great and impregnable Bulwark for her Safety.* His Providence is watchful for her Good, *2 Chron. 16. 9. The Eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of these whose Heart is perfect with him.* *Psal. 125. 2. As the Mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his People, from henceforth and for ever,* and his holy Angels are for her Protection; *Psal. 34. 7. The Angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* 3. A City is built of many Materials, and in it are many Buildings set in a rare Uniformity, curiously joined and compacted together; so is the Church built up of many living Stones, consisting of divers particular Societies or Spiritual Houses, *Eph. 2. 19, 20. Now therefore ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God; and are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone.*

Secondly, I am to speak of the Trade of this City to which ye are come; and concerning this, Notice, 1. This City of God has a spiritual Trade by which the Citizens are enriched, these be all Merchants who Trade dayly to Heaven, the Land that is afar off, they fetch their chief Commodities from thence, *Phil. 3. 20.* 2ly, In managing this Trade, they have their Correspondent settled above, Jesus Christ, who gives them glorious Returns of all they venture or send to Heaven; for Tears of Sorrow, he returns them the Oyl of Joy. 3ly, Their Trade is Heavenly, the Commodities he deals in are not Prohibit, nor Counterfeit, nor Temporal, nor corruptible Goods; but positively are Soul-enriching Commodities, things of great Worth and Value, *Prov. 3. 14. The Merchandise of it is better than the Merchandise of Silver, and the Gain thereof than fine Gold.* They are necessary, such as we cannot be without, no Trifles, Toys, nor Nicknacks; and they are such Goods as make the Nations and Persons who buy them happy for ever: Which will be more evident if we consider, 4ly, A few of the Particulars these spiritual Merchants Trade for in this City; here is the Truth to be had, to be bought, never to be sold, *Prov. 23. 23.* Here are the Soul-converting blessed Gospel Ordinances, *The Law*
which

which goes forth from Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem, Micah 4. 2. Here you may have the Gifts and Soul-enriching Graces of the Spirit, Faith to feed on Christ, Love to delight in him, Patience to wait on him under Trials, and Hope to expect Good at his Hand. Here are the precious Privileges of the People of God, as Justification through the Blood of Christ, your Sins shall be pardoned, and your Persons accepted, if by Faith you lay hold on his Sacrifice; you may have the Peace of God which passeth all Understanding, Union and Communion with God in Christ, 1 John 1. 3. Peace of Conscience, inward Serenity and Tranquility of Soul, Sanctification and Holiness advanced by the Spirit of Grace; yea the Pearl of Price, the Treasure hid in the Field, worth more than ten thousand Worlds, and a Crown of Glory that fades not away, 1 Pet. 1. 4. A City merchandizing and trading to a foreign Country has usually a navigable River belonging to it, by which their Commodities are brought home to their Doors; so this City has a most glorious River belonging to it that runs through every Street thereof, Psal. 46. 4. *There is a River, the Streams whereof shall make glad the City of God.* This River is the Word and Ordinances of God attended by the Blessings of his Holy Spirit, by these Streams all Commodities Believers deal in are brought to their very Doors; were it not for these, what would become of this City? To make this more evident, consider, 1. Whence this River flows, it flows from a Rock, Numb. 20. 8, 11. This Rock was first smitten, and then Waters came forth abundantly, *the Rock was Christ*, who being smitten for our Transgressions with the Rod of the Law, from him did proceed *living Water*, wherewith the Israel of God may quench their Thirst for ever; this is an inexhaustible Fountain of Water proceeding from the Throne of God, and of the Lamb, Rev. 22. 1. 2. As to the Nature of the Water of this River, it has these Qualities, it heals all the Diseases of the inward Man, it makes the hard Heart soft, tender and pliable; it opens the Eyes of him that was born blind, it cures all spiritual Consumptions which waste and decay the Graces of the Spirit; it brings down Pride, and makes a Man humble and low in his own Eyes; it is good against the Tremblings of Heart, will make a Man bold and courageous for the Cause of Christ at all times; it will effectually restore a lost Appetite, and make a Man relish spiritual Food well, making it *sweeter than Honey, or the Honey-comb*, it revives a fainting, drooping Spirit, sets in joint and heals Bones broken by Sorrow for Sin, as David's, Psal. 51. 8. And in a Word, *he that drinks of this Water shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a Well of Water springing up into everlasting Life*, John 4. 14. 3. Consider the divers Streams of this River, as the Stream of Ordinances, of Word and Sacraments, whereby the Lord gathers and builds up his Church, which he does Countenance and Bless for the good of Souls, Evid. 20. 24. The Stream of Divine Promises suitable to all your Wants; O Sinners, come to these *healing Waters*, ere the Stream be turned another way, and the Stream of heavenly Influences convincing the Guilty, converting the Sinner, strengthening the Weak, upspringing the Scurvy, and comforting the Comfortless.

Thirdly, I proposed to speak of the Government of this City of God, and here consider, 1. That as in a City there be particular Laws, Constitutions and Customs by which it is governed; so the Church of God has special Laws and Statutes belonging to it, by which it is in all things governed, which be contained in the holy Scripture, the great Charter and Statute-Book of the Church. 2. A City has a supreme Governour in it, who rectifies all Disorders and Confusions that otherways would be therein, considering the Multitude of its Inhabitants; so has the Church a supreme Governour and Head, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is by his Father given to be Head over all things to the

the Church, Eph. 1. 22. So that to this neither Pope, Prelate nor Potentate have any least Claim; and any such as shall dare presume to Supremacy or sole Headship over this Incorporation, God will resent it, yea trouble and sore vex them and their Families, as daring Presumers; this being a Gem of the Mediator's Crown, that becomes no other Head but his own alone.

Fourthly, I am to name some of the Privileges and Immunities of this City; as 1. Pardon of Sin, Isa. 33. 24. *The Inhabitants shall not say, I am Sick, the People that dwell therein shall be forgiven their Iniquity.* This is a matchless Privilege, for Sin is most dishonouring to God, most defiling to the Soul of Man, the worst of all Evils; when God absolves the Sinner, he not only forgives, but forgets the Offence, he hides his Face from it, he casts it to the depths of the Sea, that it may never be found again; and as consequent to this, delivers from the Filth of Sin, from its Power, Dominion and Punishment: *This freedom is obtained by a great Sin, even by the precious Blood of the Son of God, it is sealed by the Spirit the great Seal of Heaven, and it is everlasting, Your Sins shall be remembered no more.* 2y, Privilege is Fellowship and Communion with the Saints, Eph. 2. 6. — *Has made us sit together in heavenly Places in Christ Jesus,* — Of him the whole Family in Heaven and Earth are named. We are of the same Society with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we in the lower, they in the higher House. 3y, Believers, you have an undoubted Right to the City-Stock, or the Churches Patrimony, to the Stock of the Saints Prayers, to Store of spiritual Provision, even the Bread of Life laid up in her, Psal. 132. 15. *I will abundantly bless her Provision, I will satisfy her Poor with Bread.* To the Stock of Promises, all the Promises made to this City in general, may be profitable to every Citizen in particular, and to the Stock of the Merits and Intercession of Christ the inexhaustible Treasure of all the Saints Furniture. 4y, Believers, you may have free access to the Throne of Grace, Eph. 3. 18. Heb. 4. 16. You may come boldly and pour out your Complaints before him, and fill your Mouths with Arguments, the High Priest of our Profession has removed the flaming Sword of Justice which barred Access to the Tree of Life, and now ye may boldly approach in the new and living Way Christ has consecrate through the Vail of his Flesh. 5y, You have Right to all the Blessings of the River, the Streams whereof make glad the Inhabitants of this City, of the Nature whereof you have heard. 6y, You have a Right to the City-Guard, they attend you wherever you go, *The Angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear him,* Psal. 34. 7. And God's Attributes and watchful Providence contributes for your Safety and Defence. 7y, You are the Sons of God, John 1. 12. *You are His, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ,* Rom. 8. 17. *Heirs,* not only of Grace here, but of Glory hereafter; you shall sit on Thrones with Crowns on your Heads and Palms in your Hands, you shall be Monuments of the Mediator's Glory, and Sharers of the same; your Bodies and Souls shall be like his, and you shall be with him where he is to behold his Glory.

Use 1. Put it to the Trial if you be Citizens of this blessed City of God, and so have a Right to these glorious Privileges. Try your selves by these Evidences, 1. The Citizens of this great and glorious City are much affected with, and highly esteem and love the City where they dwell; so Believers have an honourable Regard for the Church, Psal. 137. 5, 6. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right Hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my Tongue cleave to the Roof of my Mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief Joy.* Believers have good Reason to love the Church, it is the Place of your Birth, you were Born, or rather Born again in her, Psal. 87. 5, 6. *It is the City of*

of your Father, and so all the glorious Privileges and Immunities thereof are yours; it is redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ, he has purchased and bought it by a dear Price; it is built by God, and for God, it is the Place he has chosen, he esteems highly of it; He rejoices in Zion, he loves the very Gates thereof more than all the Dwellings of Jacob: It is a splendid glorious City, the Foundations whereof are laid with precious Stones, yea with choicest Sapphires, the Streets are paved with that which is more rare than purest Gold. 2ly, If Citizens, where is your Ticket, ye were not born free Men, your Father was an Amorite, your Mother a Hittite, your Nativity of the Land of Canaan, not of the City of the living God; are ye transplanted from that Soil, and set under the Dew of Heaven? Have ye taken the glorious King of the City for your God and Portion, all the Citizens have renounced Allegiance to Foreigners, have given their Consent to this, *This God shall be my God*, they have yielded themselves to serve him with their Souls and Bodies, which are his, and have accepted of the blessed Jesus for Righteousness and Strength, Isa. 45. 24. they are well pleased with him, and daily making Use of him. 3ly, Some Citizens through their Industry, Trade and Painfulness in Merchandizing grow very Rich, and attain to great Honour among their Neighbours, and these come to be quickly taken Notice of: So here Believers come to grow very Rich in Faith, Knowledge and Experience, *The Hand of the Diligent makes Rich*, and such may be discovered by these few further Evidences, 1. Rich wealthy Merchants and Citizens can trust or stay a great while for their own, when poor Men must have all presently payed them down, the clearest Promise, or firmest Transaction will not serve their turn: So the spiritually Rich can wait patiently in the Faith of the Promise, *Psal. 40. 1. Rom. 4. 20.* when others faint if they get not some present sensible Enjoyment. 2ly, Rich Citizens have a great Stock lying by them; so Citizens of Zion have a Stock of Faith, Knowledge and Experience. 3ly, They go finer than the Poor; they who are great Dealers, and have got much by trading in spiritual Things are adorned with the Ornament of Humility, of a meek and quiet Spirit, *which in the sight of God is of great Price*, 1 Pet. 3. 4. They can deny themselves, are patient under Sufferings for the sake of Christ, and have learned much spiritual Wisdom, *which is as an Ornament of Grace about the Head, and a Chain to the Neck*, Prov. 1. 8, 9. 4ly, Such live High, keep a good Table beyond the Poor; so they who are spiritually Rich have many precious Morfels, oft feasted by Christ with him in the House of Wine, *delight themselves in Panness*, their good Conscience is a daily Feast to them. 5ly, Such Rich Men bear Burdens, Taxes and Losses better than the Poor; so Rich Believers best bear with Persecution, Reproach, Temptations and Corruptions constantly attacking them. 6ly, Rich Men can do for others, the Poor can do little for their Friends and Neighbours; thus Believers by Prayer have great Moyse and Interest in the Court of Heaven, God cannot get them denied, as Princes they wrestle and prevail; *The effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man avails much*, James 5. 16.

Use 2. Of Caution: Is this City of God to which ye are come so excellently enriched with so many Privileges, then Citizens be on your Guard against a Siege. There is an Army of Adversaries investing this City: 1. The King of the Bottomless Pit, he is the Captain General of the Besiegers: 2. Antichrist who is Satan's eldest Son and first Born, above these twelve or thirteen hundred Years has laid Siege to her; using all manner of Engine, Craft and Cruelty to batter her Walls, yea totally to destroy her. 3. The World of wicked Men of earthly carnal Principles, who abhor the City of the living God, crying, *Raze her even to the Foundations*, *Psal. 137. 7.* but our Jerusalem shall be a *burthen*

Hebrews XII. Verse 22.

313

burthen some Stone to them, be who they will. 4. There is a secret clandestine Enemy, who in a secret Way goes about to betray her, Sin and the Flesh; were it not for this, other Parties at the Siege might be soon raised; but this is the abominable Fox God's Soul loaths, and which is ready to betray this City to her Adversaries. 5. A Multitude of false Teachers do great Hurt and Damage to the Church of God, they labour to poison her Members with erroneous Doctrine, to pollute the Fountains of Waters, that the Inhabitants may be killed thereby. 6. Intestine Divisions within her own Bowels, do sometimes more Hurt than Adversaries from without, wherefore all true Citizens had need to Guard and Pray against this. 7. Rotten and corrupt Members admitted within her Walls, who should have been kept out; these forward the Siege, they do the Besiegers Service within her Gates. 8. Many who seemed to be for her have deserted her, and joined the Enemy to their own infinit Loss, Confusion, and Shame.

Notwithstanding all these oppose the City of the living God, yet she remains Safe and Impregnable, and that 1. Because the City is built upon a Rock, has sure Foundations which cannot be moved, *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it,* Matth 16. 18. 2. The Lord of Hosts has, does, and will Fight for her, it is he who is on her side; He has defended her when *Papists, Prelates, Mahometans, Jews, Gentiles, Hereticks* of all Sorts, and the Devil their Ring-leader, have set themselves to the utmost against her: *Psal. 125. 2. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his People from henceforth and for ever.* 3. God has decreed her Standing, and that her Enemies shall not prevail, *Zech. 12. 8, 9. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.* 4. God has made Choice of her for his Rest and Dwelling-place, *Psal. 74. 2. There does his Honour dwell, Psal. 26. 8.* 5. She is a City of great, strong, and noble Fortifications, *Isa. 26. 1. Salvation is for her Walls and Bulwarks.* 6. She has a strong Tower in her, so long as this stands she cannot be battered down, it is Impregnable, you may sooner pull down the Stars as undermine or demolish any Part of this Tower of Zion, which is the Name of the Lord, to which the Righteous run and are safe, *Prov. 18. 10.* 7. In her are the Laws, Statutes, Ordinances, and Institutions of her King our Lord Jesus, here he is Worshipped and Adored in Spirit and Truth, he will be tender of letting his own Ordinances fall to the Hands of his Enemies. Therefore, all ye Sons of Zion, take Encouragement, whatever the Attempts of Enemies may be, yet, upon all the Glory shall be a Defence, *Isa. 4. 5. all whose feet stand within her gates, shall read Honour, Safety, and Salvation, written upon her Walls.* O! Prefer her to your chiefest Joy, be filled with Care and Solitude for her; and let this be a Warning to all Zion's Enemies, to take heed how they lift up the Hand against, or reproach her: Let them even lay down their Arms, Besiege and Fight against her no more, For, *The Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake, but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain,* Joel 3. 16, 17.

Use 3d. Of Exhortation, Stir up your selves, and plead seriously with the God and King of this City, to raise her Siege, and deliver her from the Power and Designs of her Enemies. If you be Citizens, you are highly concerned in this Matter; allow me therefore to enforce this as your present Duty by a few Considerations, 1. God's own Glory is much concerned in her; if his Glory be dear to you, he allows and expects it of you, that

that you will give him no rest till he make this City the praise of the whole Earth: With the Rich, and the Poor, as well as the Brute Beasts, and the Salvations thereof, as a Lamp that burneth. Isa. 62: 1, 90. Consider the Excellency of this City, it is the Glory of a Nation, and when it is taken by the Enemy, the Glory is departed from Israel: It is the Strength of a Nation, the Terror of its Enemies, and the great Bulwark of Israel: It is the Trusting-place between him and his People, he has promised, *Where I record my Name, there will I come and bless, there will I meet with thee*: Wrestle then earnestly for the Continuance and Blessing of the precious Gospel Ordinances. 3. The Salvation of your own and others Souls is deeply concerned, the Offers of Salvation are here brought to our Door, if these be gone where is our Souls Food? We and our Children shall starve: Ignorance, Profaneness, Error and Atheism, shall like a Flood overflow all Banks. 4. If this City be Razed, how Tremendous shall the evil Consequences be that shall follow thereupon? Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my Soul depart from thee: lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited. Jerem. 6: 8. — *Yea, we also to them when I depart from them*, Hoies 9: 12. When the Glory of God goes from his Altar to the Pincel, then the destroying Angels are sent forth. When God is provoked for Sins of particular Churches, to give them to the Hands of their Enemies, he seldom, if ever, returns again: He never returned to his Ark at Shiloh, the ten Tribes were never intirely delivered from their Assyrian Captivity. The Jews have these seventeen hundred Years wandered without Priest, Epope, or Teraphim, as neither Church nor Nation, bearing the Marks of God's Indignation. The Eastern Churches have for a long time been made under Foot by Mahometan Power, and many Churches in Europe by Antichristian Tyranny. 5. If you cast your Eyes either Abroad or at Home, if you be not quite Blind, you may see imminent Danger to this City of the living God. Look to the Face of Affairs through the Christian World, how does Antichrist prevail? What Combinations are there among Christian Princes to heal the Wounds of the Beast again? And mean time, Protestant Princes altogether unconcerned for their Mother Church. Look nearer Home and see the Danger of this City, our Sins, the Provocations of Sons and Daughters are accessory to the Danger. There is no Sin can bring on the Wrath of a holy God, but it is to be found, yea, abounds with us, as, *Atheism and Contempt of the Gospel*. As many Offers of Christ's Grace and Mercy, as many Sights thrown on them, and that with Contempt by the greater Part. What horrid Profaneness, Curfing, Swearing, Drinking and Whoring, &c. abounds? this uttered in Destruction to Shiloh, the Trusting-place once betwixt him and his ancient Church, and will, without Repentance, do so to this. Covetousness and sinful Care for the World also reign, when People turn like Children, to prefer their Swine to Christ, then he departs. Our falling from First Love and First Work may also provoke God to remove his Candlestick. Revel. 2: 5. O Professors of Scotland hear this, you are eminently Guilty. Want of Zeal, great Lukewarmness and Indifference may also provoke him to spew us out of his mouth. Revel. 3: 16. Alas, every man care for his own thing, but few for the Things of Christ: Secular Interests are the Springs of their Actions, which will & must by all Ways and Means they seek to advance, tho' to the Ruine of the Church. Yea, Blood shed and Murder, Blood touching Blood has been in Prisons, Scaffolds and Fields in Scotland, and is yet unrepented of, and our Covenant with the most high God has been broken, we have shamefully rent and torn our Marriage Contract. As no Sort of Sins but they abound, so there is no Sort of Judgments but we share of them for these our Transgressions, Sword, Famine, Pestilential Maladies, Discord, Animosities, Feats and Divisions have raged through the Land, the Ang

of the Lord has departed us. We are also under some Beginnings of God's Departure. How rare Conviction and Conversion Work in our Day? His wonted Power and Glory is not seen in the Sanctuary, to satisfy the Souls of his People, as with Marrow and Fats. Should not these things alarm us, to stir up our selves to take hold of him, and not let him go from his Palace at Jerusalem.

If it be asked, How may I know if my Concern on this Head be of the right Stamp? Answer, Try it by these Evidences, 1. Are you filled with awful Apprehensions of God's Displeasure, putting you to cry, *Oh! let not the Lord be angry.* 2. Are you serious in the Exercise of Mourning for Sin, which provokes the Lord to leave us. 3. Does your Sorrow for Sin hinder carnal Pleasure, and make you cast out with your wonted Jollity? 4. Do your Cares and Fears on this Head, swallow up all other Cares and Fears? like old Eli, your Heart trembles for the Ark of God, 1 Sam. 4. 12. and like his Daughter in Law, who could solace her self in nothing while the Ark was in Captivity, but called her choicest external Comforts *lethared*, *The Glory is departed from Israel, for the Ark of God is taken.* 5. Are ye Wrestling and Praying for the Peace of Jerusalem, and doing what you can to reform your selves and others with whom ye may have Influence, that ye may return to the Lord from whom you have revolted, and that he may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and visit his Church with Mercy and Salvation.

If it be thus, then ye have some Signs of a suitable Concern for the Welfare of the Church, the City of the living God.

But after all, is it not for a Lamentation, that there be so few set a work at the Throne, deprecating threatened Danger? This proceeds from great Ignorance. People do not enquire after the State the Church is in! Many are smitten judicially with a Spirit of Slumber and deep Sleep, lying secure under Hatches in midst of the Storm. Many know not the Worth and Glory of the Gospel that is threatened to be removed from us. Many have no Sense of Soul Necessities, and therefore think they can live well enough without the Gospel. And too many indulge carnal Mirth and Jollity, *Lie in Beds of Ivory, and drink Wine in Bowls;* are drowned over Head and Ears in Sensuality, and care not for the Church, the City of the living God.

Under another Expression in the Text, *The heavenly Jerusalem*, we have two other Privileges of the Gospel State, to which we are come, couched: It is a State of Peace, so signifies Jerusalem: And It is an Heavenly State. This leads to

Observe 2d, *The State under the Law was a State of Wrath and War, but under the Gospel it is a Jerusalem State, a Vision of Peace.* Isa. 54. 13. *Great shall be the Peace of thy Children.*

To prepare this Note for your Use, I shall, First, Shew, what Kind of Peace it is which the Gospel of Peace brings? Secondly, How to know a True from a False Peace?

As to the First, The Peace the Gospel brings, is either Outward or Inward. First, Outward Peace, which is either 1. *Oeconomical Peace*, in a Family. Or 2. *Political Peace*, in the State, which indeed, if right Improved, is the Nurse of Plenty, *Psal. 147. 14. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.* 3. *Ecclesiastical Peace*, in the Church, which stands in Opposition to Schism and Persecution, *ANNO* a Door opened to both which, a Toleration or Indulgence would inevitably prove, as Things now stand, which we pray the Representatives of the Nation now met in Parliament may take Care to prevent. Secondly, There is an Inward and Spiritual Peace, which is either with God or with Conscience. The last takes its Rise

from the first *Peace with God*, or the *Peace of Reconciliation*, is a transcendent and superlative Blessing, in making whereof the whole Trinity concur: The Father who is the God of Peace, 1 Thess. 5. 23. The Son, who is the Prince of Peace, Isa. 9. 6. who has purchased Peace by the Blood of his Cross, Coloss. 1. 20. and proclaims the Offers of Peace in the Gospel, Ephes. 2. 17. And the holy Spirit, who causes us to accept of the Offers of Peace, and intimates Pardon and Peace to our Souls; thence it is called a fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5. 22. Peace of Conscience flows from the Testimony of a good Conscience; this the Apostle had, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the world.* And this leads to Everlasting Peace, in the full Enjoyment of God.

Secondly, I am to shew how ye may know a True from a False Peace. A true and real Peace is founded, 1. Upon Union with Christ, John 16. 33. *In me ye may have Peace*; this Union is made up by Faith on our Part, embracing Christ for our Righteousness and Strength, and by the Spirit on Christ's Part. 2. It is founded upon Subjection to Christ's Scepter, Power and Authority, where he gives Peace, he sits on the Throne of the Soul, and Governs, Isa. 9. 6, 7. his Government and Peace go together, he is a Priest on his Throne, Zech. 6. 13. As a Priest he makes Peace, but he will be a Priest on his Throne; where-ever he pacifies the Conscience, there he subdues Lust. 3. True Peace is ay after Trouble, first a Spirit of Bondage is let loose to convince and humble the Soul, then the Lord speaks Peace, he pours in this sweet Oyl into the broken Heart, *But the wicked are like a troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, there is no Peace saith my God to the wicked*, Isa. 57. 20, 21. They may delude themselves a while, but shall be quickly undeceived when thrown head-long into the Pit of Perdition. This False Peace may be known by these Signs, 1. The Person who has it, has much Confidence, yet founded on meer Conceit, he doubts not of God's Mercy; hence he sounds a Requiem to himself, *Soul take thee ease*; but never considers how the Justice of God shall be satisfied for his Sin. 2. It separates these things God has inseparably conjoined, Namely, Holiness and Peace; he claims the last but banisheth the first, Deuter. 29. 19. *I shall have peace tho' I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.* A meer Delusion, ye may sooner suck Health out of Poison, as Peace out of Sin. 3. This Peace is not willing to be tried, it is a Sign of bad Wares, when they will not endure the Light; that a Man has stolen Goods, when he will not allow his House to be searched.

Use 1. Of Caution, Do not mistake this Matter, tho all Believers have a Right to True Peace, and have an Interest in that Promise, Psal. 29. 11. *The Lord will bless his people with peace*, yet they may sometimes be without the Sense of it, they cannot make Use of their Right to their own Satisfaction and Comfort. And this proceeds 1. From furious Attacks of Temptation; if the Devil cannot destroy them, he will disturb them: 2. Through Mistake and Misapprehension, they oft conclude when they find the Stirrings of Corruption, they have no Grace; whereas it is only by Grace we come to feel the Power of Sin, Rom. 7. 21. Gal. 5. 17. Lay a thousand weight on a dead Man, he will never feel it, which to a living Man would be a heavy Burden.

Use 2d. Be exhorted to endeavour after this Peace with God and Conscience; upon this ye may triumphantly bid Defiance to all Enemies. To enforce this, consider, 1. This gives Boldness at the Throne of Grace, when the Spirit is whispering Peace, then he goes to God as a Child to a Father, Rom. 5. 1, 2. *Being justified by faith, we have peace*

peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into his grace. David's Soul was sometimes bowed down, as Psal. 38. 6. but when at Peace with God, then he says, *To thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, O my God, I trust in thee*, Psal. 25. 1, 2. This fires the Heart with Love to God, being the Result of Pardon; a Criminal who has got his Pardon sealed, cannot but love his Prince: How endeared is Christ to the Souls of such who are at Peace with him? They go singing, *As a bundle of myrrhe is my well beloved to me, he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts*. 3. This quiets the Heart in Trouble, *Adicab 5. 5. This man shall be the peace when the Assyrians shall come into our land*. We know not what Assyrians may enter our land; a justly provoked God, may, in prosecution of his Controversie against us, sheath the Sword of a Stranger in our Bowels ere all be done. But O happy Believers, tho' they may invade your Persons, yet not your Peace; the Messiah shall be your Peace: You may sing, *I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety*, Psal. 4. 8. 4. This is the Souls Guard against all inward Errors, Phil. 4. 7. *And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ*. The Persons of Princes are secured by Guards of Valiant Men, *Solomon's bed had threescore valiant Men about it*, Song 3. 7. The Peace of God is the Believers Lifeguard, which makes dwell in Ease, as well as in Safety.

Use 3. Of Direction, How ye may attain this Peace: First, Go to the God of Peace for it, he can still the raging Conscience, all Angels in Heaven could not speak Peace without God. 2ly, Make War with Sin, that is the Achan troubles us, 2 Kings 9. 22. *What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms and Witchcrafts of thy Mother Jezebel are so many?* Give Battel to Sin, it is a most just War, God has proclaimed it, ye shall get Victory which will resolve into Peace; slay this Lyon, and Honey shall come out of it. 3ly, Go to Christ's Blood for Peace, this Blood of Sprinkling speaks better things than that of Abel, Heb. 12. 24. Accept of our blessed Redeemer on his own Terms, to be your Righteousness and Strength, your all, and in all; his Blood pacified God's Anger, satisfied his Justice, and cannot but pacifie your Conscience, if embraced by Faith, Rom. 5. 1. 4ly, Walk exactly with God; Peace comes from a pure accurate Practice, Gal. 6. 16. *As many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God*.

As for you who have this Peace, Take care to keep and maintain it, it is a precious Jewel, beware lest ye lose it: And for this End, beware of Relapses; has God spoken Peace to you? Do not turn again to Folly, Psal. 85. 8. It was long ere God was reconciled, and the Breach made up after former Transgressions, and will ye again eclipse your Comfort, and forfeit your Peace? Be also daily making up your Spiritual Accounts, see how Matters stand betwixt God and your Souls, commune oft with your own Hearts, Psal. 77. 6. Frequent reckonings keep God and Conscience Friends, promotes a holy Walk and Practice, and so preserves your Peace.

As this Gospel-State is peaceable, so it is heavenly; the heavenly Jerusalem. This leads to

Observe 6. The Citizens of the City of the living God should endeavour to be like their Privileges. All being Heavenly, these Jerusalemites should be also Heavenly.

To prepare this Note for our Use, I shall, First, Shew what is imported in being Heavenly. Secondly, Give Reasons to prove and recommend the Doctrine to your Practice.

As to the first, That Saints should be heavenly like their Privileges, imports, 1. That your Souls chief Aim and Endeavour should level at securing of Heaven, for it is your Portion and Heritage, this is on your Heart, it is your up-taking Task, that when these Houses of Clay tumble about your Ears, ye may be secured of one House in the Heavens, eternal, not made with Hands. 2^d, That the Study of Holiness is the only way to attain Happiness, *Matth. 5. 8. Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God. Heb. 12. 14. Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* 3^d, A noted Correspondence kept up betwixt our Hearts and Heaven, by sending Faith as a Spy to take fresh Views of the Glories there, and it returning fraughted with Soul-reviving Accounts and Discoveries thereof, and of the Souls Interest therein. 4th, An Endeavour to imitate those who are there, not to be fashioning our selves to *Men of this World*, but aspiring with them above, to have our Communion with God, to delight in heavenly Exercises of Praise, of Contentment with Christ alone, of Meditation on his matchless Beauty, of wondering at his Glory, of Love to him, and to one another, and to perform their Duties in a heavenly Manner, cheerfully, fervently, frequently without wearying, with an unte Heart, and a serene Composure of Spirit. 5th, You must keep up a constant Trade with Heaven; you are Burgesses there, the Privileges of it belong to you; if you would Trade successfully, you must have skill in the Commodities you Trade for; you must have a Stock of Grace, that cannot be quite lost to Trade with; you must take Advantage of Markets, improve Opportunities when the Spirit calls, or your Hearts are in a spiritual Frame for Duties; keep Intercourse with this foreign Country, and depend on our blessed Jesus your Correspondent and Advocate above, that tho' ye meet with some Delays and Disappointments, yet he will in the End give most advantageous Returns.

Secondly, I am to give some Reasons recommending this Duty to your Practice; and First, The Command of God lays it on you as your Duty, *Col. 3. 1. 2. Seek these things which are above, where Christ is at the right Hand of God; set your Affections on things above, not on things on the Earth.* 2^d, This has been the Practice of all the Cloud who have gone to Heaven before you, while going through the Wilderness of the World, they had their Conversation in Heaven, *Phil. 3. 20. They looked for a City which had Foundations, whose builder and maker is God, Heb. 11. 10.* You must live like them, if ye would Land with them. 3^d, This will contribute exceedingly to your own Advantage, it will keep your Evidences to Glory clear, it will keep the Graces in lively Exercise, the Spices flowing out and giving a goodly Smell, it will keep up a spiritual Frame for Duties, it will hush Idols to the Door and outbid them, it will wean from and mortify your Souls to the World, and it will strengthen and fortify against Discouragements, and in a Word, prepare you for Glory before ye come to enjoy it. 4th, The new Structure and Frame of your Soul obliges you to it, your heavenly Nature marks you out as not of this World. 5th, Because the Society ye belong to, God, Angels and Saints are all Heavenly, and so should ye be. 6th, All your Hopes, your Stock and Treasure is in Heaven, and there must your Heart be. Your God and Father, your Husband and elder Brother, your Mansion-house and Inheritance, your Substance and chief Friends, your landing Place, and End of your Journey, all is in Heaven; there are more than sufficient Loadstones to draw your Hearts off the World, where there is Nothing but Sorrow and Sighing, Temptations, Losses and Crosses, and fix them upon these endless Joys in Glory, which ye expect ere long to possess.

Use 1. Of Information. Whatever Pretensions; yet there be but few who really bear the Badge of the Citizens of the City of God; few who are Heavenly, Holy and Spiritual, many mistake Religion, looking on this as nothing Essential to it, reckoning on meer Morality; but think what they will, who begin not here to make Conscience to be Heavenly, they shall never see Heaven hereafter. Yet we hope better things of some, however this Set of Heart and Frame be a Mystery to the World, yet it is the Study of a gracious Soul.

Use 2. Of Trial. If ye you be come to this heavenly Frame of Soul, try, 1. By your inward Disposition and Frame of Spirit, if freed from these inward Disorders and Passions, to which the Men of this World are Subject and in Servitude; do ye look from the Top of Amana and Hermon to the Mount of Myrrho, weaned from what is earthly, having a steady Temper beyond Lewisy and Unsteadyness; 2. Try by your Love to, and Delight in these Duties, and in the Exercise of these Graces which are the Work of Heaven. Do ye Love and Delight in Communion with God, are ye hotly Impatient to want him, be like without his Presence? Are ye much in the Study of his glorious and splendid Perfections? Are ye endeavouring to get your Hearts fixt as a Pillar in his House, no more to go out from him? Are ye much in admiring and adoring free Grace and the Love of God, and in a holy Manner ravished with Contemplation of his Glory? 3. Are ye taken up in the Work of Praise, oft singing, *Worthy is the Lamb who has redeemed us with his own Blood*, and commending him to others? Are ye longing for the Sabbath to converse more closely with him, and for secret Retirements to pour out your Hearts before him? 3b. This is another Evidence of a heavenly Frame, when the Praeace and Conversation favours Heaven, being in every Step superscribed, *Holiness to the Lord*, as when the Heart is much in conversing with spiritual and heavenly Things, of a sublime divine Strain of Mind, not debasing it self to converse with dunghill Vanities, but as *Psalm 139. 18. When I awake, I am still with thee*. Last at Night, and first in the Morning the Heart may be found with the Lord. When all Desires and Affections of the Soul are heavenly, when your Expressions and Converse favours of it, in thinking Grace to the Hearers. When all your Duties, as Prayer, Hearing, Reading and Meditation carry a Stamp of Heaven on them, as if ye saw God standing by you; and when your Way in the Interval of Duties, whatever you be about, Eating, Drinking, Recreation, Shop or Trade, you have high and heavenly Ends before you, conversing with God in them; so as your Way may be convincing and edifying to Onlookers. 4b. When Heaven becomes (as it were) the Believers Home and dwelling Place, for ordinar he is to be found there, he finds no Content or Satisfaction when it is otherways, till he be there again, as a Man when from Home, it is his Endeavour to have his Heart still there, being his Stock and Treasure is there, his Faith is as spying out the Cities there, his Love is as there folding its Arms about the Lamb, and him that sits on the Throne, both to loose them from these sweet Embraces. His Hope is there, being as *Anchor cast within the Veil*, keeping the Soul in Storms; and his Comfort is there, that he meet with Tribulations in the World yet this is his Cordial, he shall quickly be free of them, Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away, and all Tears shall be wiped from his Eyes, when he shall be advanced to the full Enjoyment of God through endless Eternity. To have your Souls thus exercised, is your chief Endeavour, and when ye fail, it is your greatest Grief.

Use 3. Of Correction. And Reproof to Strangers to this heavenly Frame: Is not this express Disobedience to a positive Command of God, *Ye shall love of me as dear Children?*

Is not what we have recommended a noble Duty, yet a dignifying Privilege to be in Heaven while on Earth? If ye had Impression of the Worth of Heaven, ye would be more in it. Will ye never so much as go to see the House where (ye say) ye are to dwell for ever: How dare ye come before God with any Measure of Boldness, who never had this for your Study and Endeavour? Do you think to die either comfortably or safely, when ye mind Heaven and the Way to it so little.

Use 4. Of Exhortation. Be prevailed with to make Spirituality and heavenly Mindedness your great uptaking Business. To move you to this, Consider, 1. This is a Set of Frame and Spirit that is possible to be attained, notwithstanding the Clogs and Entanglements of the Body, the natural Abilities of the Mind can in a Minutes time dispatch a nimble Messenger to Heaven, and mount its Thoughts from this to that World in a Moment; and the gracious Principles implanted in the Soul do actually incline the Mind to mount its Thoughts Heavenward, so that Believers act against the very Law of their new Nature, when they place their Affections elsewhere. 2^{ly}, A Mind in Heaven is most congruous and comely for such as are enrolled Inhabitants and Citizens of this heavenly Jerusalem; where should Believers Love be, but where their Lord is, our Hearts and Homes use not to be long asunder. 3^{ly}, This is a most sweet and delightful Exercise, no Pleasure in the World comparable to it, *Rom. 8. 6. To be spiritually minded is Life and Peace.* 4^{ly}, This is a solid Evidence of our Interest in Heaven, an agreeable Frame is the surest Title, *Col. 3. 1. If when ye be risen with Christ, seek these things which are above.* *Vers. 4. When Christ who is our Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in Glory.* *Matth. 6. 21. Where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.* 5^{ly}, It will render all your Service and Obedience to God acceptable; this will prove it to be sincere and true, the World has ay the Choice of the Hypocrites Heart, he dwells on *Amana, Shenir and Hermon*, the Pleasures, Profits and Honours of the World; or if he give a Look from this to Heaven at a Time, it is but a Self-interest to quiet a grumbling Conscience, and support his vain Hopes of Heaven, but he is never acted from a new Principle, a new Nature never presses him to his Duty. As heavenly Mindedness proves the Sincerity, so the Excellency of our Obedience; for when heavenly, it is free, voluntary and unconstrained, drops like Honey of its own accord out of the Honey-comb, *Song 4. 11.* As Water from a Fountain, *John 4. 14.* A carnal, earthly Professor must be squized by some weight of Affliction ere he yield a Tear, or pour out a Prayer, *Psal. 78. 34. When he slew them then they sought him;* but a spiritually-minded Christian takes Delight in Repentance and Prayer. 6^{ly}, This will qualifie, fit and prepare you for the Enjoyment of God in Heaven, ye are begotten, moulded and framed for it, ere ye enter into it, *1 John 3. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4.* This Principle of Grace and Spirituality is the very Seed of that of Glory and of Heaven it self. Finally, This heavenly Disposition of Spirit glorifies God, commends Religion before the World, renders Suffering easie, *2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.* and Death sweet, for tho' ye change your Place, yet not your Company, your Habitation, but not your Exercise.

Use 5. Of Direction, How to attain to be thus Heavenly: *First,* Be perswaded of the Emptiness, Insufficiency and unsatisfying Nature of all things, when the Marrow of them is squized out, you may with *Solomon* superscribe all with this Motto, *Vanity of vanities*, and as *Psal. 39. 5. Verily every Man as his best estate is altogether Vanity.* 2^{ly}, Open your Hearts to receive precious Christ as offered in the Gospel, and then the things above where he is will get more of your Heart, *He will lie all Night betwixt your Breasts.* 3^{ly}, Wean your Hearts from Creature Consolations, these two are opposite,

Set your Affection on things above, not on things on the Earth, Col. 3. 2. Use the things of the World as not abusing them, for the fashion of this World passeth away. 4ly, Lay up your Stock and Treasure in the heavenly Jerusalem, this will make you mind it more, Where the Treasure is, there the Heart will be. 5ly, Oft Meditate on heavenly and spiritual Things, be oft recounting the blest Advantages, the glorious Privileges, and matchless Happiness that is there, Psal. 139. 18. When I awake, I am still with thee. 6ly, Be frequent and fervent in Prayer, by this maintain a Trade with Heaven, getting back large Returns, whereby ye may be transformed into the same Image, as from Glory to Glory. 7ly, Beware of these things which may hinder your heavenly Mindedness in this Life, and will surely shut you out of Heaven in the Life to come. As spiritual Sloth, Prov. 13. 4. The Soul of the S sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: Men would be content to be heavenly here, and to have Heaven hereafter, would it but drop as a ripe fig into their Mouth without Pains, Prov. 19. 15. Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; as Adam lost his Rib when asleep, so many lose Heaven. Beware of Unbelief, ye cannot set your Mind and Heart on what ye believe not, Heb. 3. 12. They could not enter in because of Unbelief. Mistake not the Way, as if easier and broader than indeed it is, as if a heavenly, upright, strict, tender Walk and Frame of Soul were not necessary, as if a Sigh or Grogan, crying, God be merciful to me, would suffice, these Mistakes are dangerous: Beware of Delays, it is an usual Delusion, I must be worldly now, but if that were once secured, I shall be heavenly, But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you, is Christs Method, Matth. 6. 33. Delays strengthen Sin, harden the Heart, and give the Devil fuller Possession of the Soul. Beware of Presumption, too many presume all is well, they are heavenly enough already, and they will go to Heaven afterward; the Devil has applyed his Opium to them, by which they are fast asleep, are like the Leviathan, without Fear, lives as bad as the worst, and hopes to be saved as well as the best, He blesteth himself, and saith, he shall have Peace tho' he go on in Sin: The Anger of the Lord, and his Jealousia shall smoke against that Man, and all the Curses that are written in this Book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his Name from under Heaven; see the Place, Deut. 29. 19, 20. Beware of the Delights and Pleasures of the Flesh, some People cannot endure a serious Thought of Salvation, but for profane Comedies and Romances they have Leisure enough; They put far away the evil Day, and cause the Seat of Violence to draw near. — They lie upon Beds of Ivory, and eat the Lambs of the Flock; they chant to the Sound of the Viol, and invent to themselves pleasant Instruments of Musick like David, they drink Wine in Bowls, and anoint themselves with chief Ointments; therefore shall they go into Captivity with the first that go Captive. Beware of a covetous dunghill Spirit, which makes some Men choose to forsake Christ rather as renounce the World, Luke 18. 23. Finally, Beware of indulging any Sin, one Sin continued in will damn as well as many moe; therefore be on your Guard, and especially against your darling Idols, Psal. 18. 23. and Sins of Presumption which wound the Conscience, and draw down heavy Judgments. 8ly, Get the Exercise of these Graces which will keep you heavenly here, and bring you to Heaven hereafter, as divine, saving, experimental Knowledge, there is no going to Heaven blindfold, Col. 1. 10, 12: this lights us the Way thither. Get Faith that endures to Salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 9. who believes in Christ is as sure to go to Heaven, as if he were there already, Acts 16. 31. And gain Love, if ye love God, he will love you, 1 John 4. 19. and allow you Tokens of his Favour, in the Flames of this Fire of Love the Soul ascends to Glory.

I come now to the last Privilege named in this Text, to which Believers under the New Testament come to, *An Innumerable Company of Angels*. Or as it reads in the Greek, *10 Myriads of Angels*, a *Myriad* is properly ten thousand, and when used in the plural Number, it signifies an innumerable Company. Possibly he relates to Angels which attended the Presence of God at the giving of the Law, *Psalm 68. 17.* This Access to Angels is Spiritual, the Access of the People to their Ministry on Mount Sinai was Corporeal only, nor had they any Communion with them thereby; but ours is Spiritual, and needs no local Access, no Reason for praying to them with idolatrous Rome; for tho' there be a Difference betwixt their Persons and ours in Dignity and Power, yet as to this Communion we are equal in it with them, as themselves declare, *Rev. 19. 10.* Chap. 22. 9. From this Part of the Text results

Observation 7. *That under the Gospel State it is the high Privilege of Believers to have Fellowship with Angels.* They are come to an Innumerable Company of Angels.

To prepare this Note for your Use, I shall, 1. Prove it from Scripture. 2. Shew the Greatness of the Privilege. 3. How we have this Fellowship with them. 4. What is the Work they are employed about toward Men, especially the Elect.

First, The Truth of this Point, that Saints have Fellowship with Angels, as it is evident from the Text, so may be farther proven, 1. Because they are of one Family, *Eph. 3. 14.* *Of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named.* All are under the same Master, God provides, directs, assists, comforts, carries out Work, and gives suitable Rewards to his whole Family of Saints and Angels in Heaven and Earth; all are Subservient to the same Design of his own Glory. 2ly, Saints and Angels are Fellow-Citizens of the same City of the living God, as in the Text; and *Eph. 2. 19.* *Ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God;* we have a Share of the same Privileges with them. 3ly, In Heaven they shall come to be of one Quire, and sing one Song, *Rev. 5. 8. 9.* *The four Beasts, and four and twenty Elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them Harps, and golden Vials full of Odours.* — *And they sung a new Song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation.* *Rev. 19. 4. 5.* *And the four and twenty Elders, and the four Beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the Throne, saying, Amen; Alleluja. And a voice came out of the Throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his Servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.*

Secondly, I am to shew that this Fellowship with Angels is a rich, glorious and comfortable Privilege; for 1. It speaks great Friendship after fore Enmity, when Strangers, these Cherubims wore a flaming Sword which turned every way to keep the way of the Tree of Life, *Gen. 3. 24.* but being by the Gospel made Friends in Christ, they are now our Intimates, we are become Angels Delight; *There is Joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth.* 2ly, Here is the nearest Union under one Head; *Ephes. 1. 10.* *All things in Heaven and Earth are gathered together in one in Christ.* 3ly, Thus by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God is made known even to Principalties and Powers, (that is) to Angels, *Eph. 3. 10.* these Mysteries of our Redemption the Angels desire to look into, *1 Pet. 1. 12.* 4ly, This Fellowship is useful to the Saints, hereby you have an honourable Attendance in Peace and Trouble, *Psal. 34. 7.* *The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* They have a Charge given them to keep Saints in all their ways. They are ministering Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation, *Heb. 1. 14.* *They bear you up that ye stumble not, they fight for you, as Gen. 32. 1. 2.*

2 Kings 6. 17. Revel. 12. 7. Michael and his Angels fought against the Devil and his Angels.

Thirdly, I proposed to shew how we have Fellowship with Angels in this Gospel State; and First, *Negatively*, We have not sensible Fellowship with them, this is what God rarely vouchsafeth to any, ye should not affect Apparitions of Angels and Conferences with them, this some have had, but it is extraordinar, and not the common way appointed of God, and therefore not to be desired; for such Apparitions would render our Faith less noble and generous, *John 20. 29. Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*; we are to walk by Faith, and not by Sight. These Apparitions would be frightful and ready to confound and terrifie us, to leave us at an Uncertainty whether they be good Angels or bad. If these Appearances were frequent, they would endanger our being drawn to gross and carnal Apprehensions of Angels, yea tempt to give them an undue Honour, and to neglect God. We have no Promise of any such thing, only that they shall praise their Tents about us, and keep us in all our Ways, but not that we shall see them, and have familiar Conferences with them, and hear them speak to us audibly. To desire this were a sinful tempting of God, to seek to put Angels out of their way, and that the ordinary Course of God's Providence should be altered. Angels are none of the Teachers we are desired of God to have Recourse to, 1 Cor. 11. 28. *Eph. 4. 21*: So that for us to desire such visible Appearances of Angels, were to slight Means institute of God; when the rich Glutton desired to have his Brethren Heaven-warned by an Apparition, it was answered, *They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them: And if they hear not them, neither will they be persuaded, though one should rise from the dead*, Luke 16. 28.—31.

But *Positively*, We have Fellowship with Angels in this Gospel-State in these Respects, 1. By the Recapitulation of them and us in Christ, *Eph. 1. 10. All things which are in Heaven and in Earth are gathered together in him*, they are brought into one mystical Body, whereof Christ is the Head, *One Family in Heaven and Earth called after his Name*, *Eph. 3. 14, 15*. 2ly, By their and our being constantly engaged in the same Worship of Christ, hence they call themselves our Fellow-servants, *Rev. 19. 10*: This God has given in Command to them, as well as to us, *Let all the Angels of God worship him*, *Heb. 1. 6*. which they do accordingly, *Rev. 4. 11, 12*. 3ly, By that Oneness in Design and Communion in Service betwixt them and us, that Fear and Dread of them that was under the Law is taken away, there is a perfect Reconciliation betwixt Christians on Earth and Angels above; the Distance and Enmity that was betwixt them and us is taken away, *Col. 1. 20*. 4ly, We have Fellowship with them in Respect of the Ministry committed to them for the Service of the Church, *Heb. 1. 14. They are all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be Heirs of Salvation*. And this leads me

In the fourth Place, To enquire what is the Work Angels are employed about toward Men, especially the Elect. I hope it will be no Digression from the Scope and Purpose of the Text to enquire whether this Work extends to all, or is limited to the Elect only? Answer, Sure had it not been for the Elects sake, he would never have sent forth these blessed Spirits to Minister in the Church, yea *all things are for their sake*, 2 Cor. 4. 11: Yet they are employed about the Concerns of others beside the Elect. But to prevent Mistakes on this Point, consider, 1. That the Work and Ministry of Angels as to the principal End of it, takes Effect only in God's Elect which is their Salvation. 2. They

cannot have such Kindness for wicked Men as for Believers, nay they are hateful and distasteful to them. 3. In their Ministry they wait on God's Command, to follow his Instructions, *Heb. 1. 14. Ezk. 1. 12. The living Creatures went as the Spirit led them.*

I come now in Particular, to shew the Angels Work and Employment about the Elect in the Church, and that in Infancy, in riper Years, at Death, and after it.

First, In Infancy Angels do take Care and Charge of them: I will not trouble you with different Sentiments of Writers on this Head; but to be sure we want not Scripture Testimonies of their Care in the Womb, at Birth, and after it, while young and tender. While in the Womb, then and there they are exposed to many Dangers, which are prevented by the Agency of Angels. An Angel is directed to *Manoah* to tell what Course the Mother should take while she went with Child of *Samson*, *Judges 13. 13, 14.* Tho' they act not so visibly now, as then, yet I doubt not but they are Instruments of God's Providence very ordinarily for that end. *David* sets a Mark on such Preservation, *Psal. 71. 6. — Thou art he that took me out of my Mother's Bowels.* At the Birth of Children how wonderfully are they kept in their coming to the World, the Psalmist acknowledges this, *Psal. 22. 9. Psal. 77. 6.* It is not the Midwife alone, but somewhat God does, and that by the Hand of invisible Agents. After Born, while young and tender, great is the Care of Angels to them. Our Lord speaks of the Angels, *Of these little ones always beholding the Face of his Father, Matth. 18. 10.* To be understood of little Ones in Age and Growth, as well as of adult Persons resembling little ones in some Vertues. What careful Instruments were they of Christ's Preservation, while a Babe in a Cradle, warning his Mother to flee with the Child from the Wrath of *Herod*. These also took Care of *Ismael* in Infancy, directing his Mother to a Well of Water when in Strait and quite discouraged.

Secondly, In riper Years, Angels are employed both for good to Soul and Body of the Lord's People: For the Soul, some they teach, as *Cornelius*, *Acts 10. 3.* and *Paul*, *Acts 16. 9.* To some they not only shew what is good, but advise to do it, as to *Gideon*, *Judges 6. 12, — 17.* to *Joseph*, *Matth. 1. 19, 20.* Some they Comfort under Discouragement and Distress, as *Daniel*, *Chap. 10. 11, 18, 19.* and *Elijah*, when Souldiers were sent to apprehend him, *2 Kings, Chap. 1.* and our Lord Christ in his Agony, *Luke 22. 43.* They are far better Comforters than any Man in the World can be, because they better know the Cases of the Soul, they are to Comfort, and so can minister most suitable Cordials, they can and do take the fittest times for comforting; Men may be so shut up as Friends cannot come near to comfort them, but Angels cannot be kept off; they have ay the purest and most divine Comforts to display to a discouraged Soul, and they have the nearest Access to the Minds of Men, so as to present things closer and nearer as any other can do: Upon these Accounts they are the best of Comforters, and this is one of their prime Offices to Believers: As they minister Help to the Souls of the Lord's People, so also to their Bodjes; and that, 1. By providing things necessary for them, as their Stewards and Caterers, to see nothing wanting that is fit for Believers; they provided Food for the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, *Psal. 78. 25.* for *Elijah* in the Wilderness, *1 Kings 19. 5, 6, 7.* After Christ our blessed Lord had fasted forty Days and forty Nights, the Devil left him, and Angels came and ministered to him, *Matth. 4. 11.* There is a sweet Promise for Believers in Straits, *Psal. 34. 7.* — 11. and whoever observes how strangely some Men have been provided for in Straits, must of Necessity acknowledge there is something more than Humane in it. 2ly, By prospering and

and succeeding their Affairs; Abraham's Servant did go about a Work full of Hazards and Difficulties, yet got quick Dispatch: how? Why, God sent his Angel with him to prosper his way, Gen. 24. 7, 10, 40. Circumstances which seem casual are sometimes disposed by the Agency of an Angel, as in Philip and the Eunuchs meeting, Acts 8. 26. which tended to the Conversion of the latter. 3ly, By preserving them from Evils, and defending them in Dangers, thus was Elisha preserved from the King of Syria's Army, 2 Kings 6. 15, 16, 17. Thus the Lord preserves his People from contagious Diseases and other Harms, Psal. 91. 10, 14. The Angel of the Lord opened the Prison Doors, and set some of the Apostles at Liberty, Acts 5. 19, 20. and the Apostle Peter, Acts 12. 6, 7, 10. It is not to be denied that many times God's Acts of Judgment are acted by Angels; Sodom was laid in Ashes, and Sennacherib's Host cut in pieces by their Agency. David saw an Angel with a Sword stretched out over Jerusalem, and Herod was smitten by an Angel, and eaten of Worms that he died; but surely their ordinary Employments are to take Care of the Lord's People.

A third Step of the Employ of Angels is for the People of God at Death; Then they are at Hand, 1. To mitigate the Pains of Death, and make it more easie: When our blessed Lord was in his Agony, There appeared an Angel unto him from Heaven strengthening him, Luke 22. 43. Hawks the Martyr being desired to give a Sign in the Fire, if his Pains were tolerable, raised his Hands, and clapt them thrice in the Flame. Bainham when half burnt cried, Here a Miracle, I find no more Pain than lying on a Bed of Roses. And it is not the Privilege of Martyrs only, but also promised to the Lord's People, The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness, Psal. 41. 3. 2. Sometimes these invisible Agents keep off and restrain evil Spirits from tempting Believers to Despair, setting their Sins before their Eyes, and hindering them to look to pardoning Mercy, Rev. 12. 7. Michael and his Angels fought against the Dragon and his Angels. 3. And sometimes these good Spirits bring Messages of ravishing Joys and Comforts to Saints when dying, giving them a Foretaste and Anticipation of the Joys of Heaven.

A fourth Step of the Employ of Angels is after Death, they receive the Soul and carry it to Heaven; there is a Contoy for them, a Safe-guard as they pass through the Devil's Territories, who is Prince of the Power of the Air; thus they did with Lazarus, Luke 16. 22. whereas the Devils drag the Souls of the wicked to Hell as soon as these leave their Bodies; but as to the Godly, as Angels minister sweet Cordials and Electuaries to them at a dying Hour, and help to triumph over it; so they conduct their separate Souls to Glory, welcome them in it, and joyn with them in singing the same sweet Song to the Praise of God and of the Lamb, Rev. 4. 8, 9. Chap. 5. 11, 12. They are as an invisible Guard to their Bodies in the Grave, Jude verse 9. And

In the fifth and last Place, Minister to them at the general Resurrection, by calling them out of their Graves, Maith. 24. 31. 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17. When raised, the Angels shall separate the Good from the Bad, Maith. 13. 41, 42: The Wicked in this Life would fain be freed of the Society of the Godly, and live separate from them; hereafter they shall get their Desire, Angels shall drive them away and bind them together in Bundles, and cast them into Hell-fire: But the Godly shall be received into Abraham's Bosom, where they shall joyn the Heavenly Quiristers, in singing Allelujahs to all Eternity; yea, there their Song shall exceed the Song of Angels, who can only say, *Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to take the Book and open the Seals thereof*, but the Saints can add, *And has redeemed us to God by thy Blood out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation*, Rev. 5. 9. This will accent the Song higher to the Praise of our glorious Redeemer.

Inferencia

Inference 1. Is it the high Privilege of Believers to have Fellowship with Angels, then be thankful to God who has bestowed such an innumerable Company of blessed Spirits on his Church for the above Ends: We bless God for Magistrates in the State, and Ministers in the Church, but we have other Governours and Rulers beside Princes, Parliaments, and Subordinate Magistrates: We have others to fight for us beside Sword-men, an innumerable Company of Angels, that are Rulers, Leaders, Keepers, and Watchers over us, let us bless God for them.

Inference 2d. What an Honour does God put on his People by assigning Angels to take Charge of them? And, how ought others to value whom God so honours? They are the excellent Ones of the Earth, Psal. 16. 3. Men of another Spirit than the World, Numb. 14. 24. Believers, value your selves by showing such Magnanimity and Greatness of Mind as becomes Persons so Dignified; I am not advising to Pride, this, as all other Sins, is the way to undervalue and set not like your selves, but value your selves in as not to pollute your selves with base Lusts and Idols, so as to be of a Generous and Princely Disposition, like Caleb, Joshua, and Daniel, and mind your noble and high Work of glorifying the King of kings, and conversing with him. Let On-lookers and all Persons put due Respect upon the Saints: Angels have no Respect of Persons, yet they value and serve them, Heb. 1. 14. Psal. 34. 6, 7. What intolerable Pride is it for Mortals to think themselves too good for Company to such, as have Fellowship with Angels.

Inference 3d. What will become of such who persecute, hate, and malign the Saints; Matth. 18. 6. Whoso shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. What became of Herod, The Angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost, Acts 12. 23. The Lord is jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion with a great jealousy: And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Zech. 1. 14, 15. These who help forward the Affliction of the People of God, tho they should not be the sole Causes of it shall pay for it, for they are Fighters against God and against Angels.

Inference 4th. If Believers be surrounded by an innumerable company of Angels, then let them be fearless however things go, saying with David, I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about, Psal. 3. 5, 6. I will boldly lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety, Psal. 4. 8. The Lord is our chief Defender, Angels are but his Ministers, Psal. 34. 6, 7. Hebr. 1. 14. Therefore Enemies may be hopeless of reaching their Design to give the Church and People of God a deadly Blow, our Lord has said, Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel, Isa. 41. 14. Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in Derision, Psal. 2. 1, 4.

Inference 5th. Have Saints Fellowship with Angels, take heed ye mistake not nor abuse this Doctrine; Angels are not Mediators betwixt God and us, that is the sole Prerogative of our blessed Lord Jesus, 1 Tim. 2. 5. neither are ye to Pray to them, that is Idolatry, God being the alone Object of Worship, holy Angels refuse it, Rev. 19. 10. Chap. 22. 9. They are only ministering Spirits to the Saints, and this shews God's Sovereignty, the holy Angels are not excused from doing him Service, his Wisdom that appoints them Work suitable to their Nature, the Glory of Christ whose Attendants they are, and the Unity of his whole Family in Heaven and Earth.

Inference

Inference 6th. Acknowledge Angels as the more excellent Creatures, love them for the amiable Perfections God has enriched them with; they are Spiritual Beings created of God, endued with great Knowledge, Wisdom and Experience, free from Sin, Death, and Suffering, capable of doing great Service to the Glory of their Maker, and the Good of his Creatures. Bless God for their being appointed Ministers, what a Wonder is it, that the glorious Scriptures of the Heavenly Quire should be made to attend and wait on the like of you, that they should strive as much to do you Good as the Devils labour to hurt you! Be careful that ye grieve them not by sinning, they are looking on, and observing your Carriage. Hence the Apostle says to Timothy, 1 Tim. 5. 21. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels.* Do your best to Maintain and Promote that Fellowship God allows his Saints with them in this Life, they attend you thro' our Sin, are your Keepers, Teachers, and Comforters, they observe and know you and your Ways, and reward when ye do well, here is your Fellowship with them. Ought ye not to do what ye can to promote this, engage them to be your Friends by living holy Lives, and keeping in God's Way; give them all the Advantage ye can to Minister for the Good of your Souls, the Power of Angels, tho' great, is but Finite and Limited, they cannot work on grossly ignorant Persons, as they can on those that have Knowledge, or on the Wicked as on the Religious. Therefore keep your Body Temperate, watch over your external Senses, which are the Windows of your Imagination, and lead a holy Life, if ye would reap this Benefit of Communion with Angels.

Inference 7th. Endeavour to imitate Angels in your Walk and Life, this is the chief Part of your Fellowship with them. To this End be Weaned from and Dead to this Sensual animal Life, and be rising to a Spiritual Angelical Life, by advancing in Understanding and Spiritual Knowledge, *John 17. 3.* by taking Delight and Complacency in God, by holy Activity and Cheerfulness, in Adoring and Praising him; and by serving him and obeying his Commands Humbly, Patiently, Sincerely, Universally, with Zeal, Fervour, Constancy and Unweariedness.

Preached
Edinburgh
July 4th
1703.

HEBREWS XII. Verse 23.

To the General Assembly, and Church of the First-born which are written in Heaven, and to GOD the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just Men made Perfect.

THIS Verse presents us with a further Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the City of the living God, three Sorts of which are specified in this Text: I begin with the first of them, *The General Assembly, and Church of the First-born which are written in Heaven.* For understanding this Part of the Text it may be necessary to consider, *First,* What is meant by, *The General Assembly and Church.* *Secondly,* Of whom this Assembly does consist, *the First-born written in Heaven.* *Thirdly,* To what the Apostle does allude by these Expressions.

As

As to the *First*, There be diverse Sentiments whence these words *First-born* are rendered in our Translation, *The General Assembly and Church*, are borrowed. 1. Some look on them as borrowed from the Customs of these Cities whose Government was Democratical, especially that of *Athen*, whose Speech was the Rule of the *Greek Language*, and thus *πρωτογενής* was the solemn Assembly of all Sorts belonging unto that City; met to be entertained with Shows, Sacrifices, and Laudatory Orations. 2. Others think them borrowed rather from the great *General Assembly* of all the *Males* of the Church of the *Old Testament*; by Divine Institution to be observed three times a Year at the general Feasts, *Exod. 34. 23. Deut. 16. 16.* the Assembly of whom was called, *The great Congregation*, *Psal. 22. 25.* Or, 3. It may allude to the *General Assembly* of the whole People at Mount *Sinai*, in receiving the *Laws*; but there is great Difference betwixt these Assemblies and this. For, to these *Civil and Political Assemblies*, as also to that of the Church, it was necessary there should be a Local Meeting of all that belonged to them; but this here intended in the Church's Assembly is Spiritual, there never was, nor never shall be a Local Meeting of them all till the last Day. But we shall understand more of this *Assembly and Church*, by considering in the second Place, of whom it does consist; of the *First-born which are written in Heaven*: Some late Expositors, as *Gratius* and his Followers, confine this to the *Apostles and Evangelists*, as did *Agrippa* and others of the *Roman Communion*, and many of the *Societians*. But the *Greek Scholiasts* apply it to the *Elect*, or to all true Believers, whom the Generality of *Orthodox Teachers* follow, and it is evident that the *Apostles* only are not here intended, because the *Apostles* themselves by the Call of the Gospel came into the *Assembly of the First-born*, and so cannot be understood Exclusively of others who come by the same Call. The *Apostles* alone have not their Names written in *Heaven*; to some in the Church of *Sodom* this Privilege did belong, *Revel. 17. 4. 5.* Yea, are not all the *Elect* capable of this Character? Does not God call all *Israel* who were a Type of his Spiritual Church, his *First-born*? *Exod. 4. 22* Are not all Believers the first-fruits of his Creatures? *James 1. 18* which, as to Dedication to God, answered the *First-born among Men*, all the redeemed Ones are the first Fruits to God and to the Lamb, *Revel. 14. 4.* Are not all of them Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ? *Rom. 8. 17.* Heirs of Salvation, *Hebr. 1. 14.* Are they not all Kings and Priests unto God? *Revel. 1. 6.* which compriseth the whole Rights of the *First-born*. Therefore there is no Reason to confine this to the *Apostles*, especially since most of them at that time were among the *Spirits of just Men made Perfect*, wherefore it is *Elect Believers* who are here intended. If it be further enquired, if some only, or if all the *Elect* be here designed? Answer, Some think that Saints departed under the *Old Testament*, being gathered to God as his *Lot and Portion*, are only so called; But these must necessarily be comprised under the following Expression, *The Spirits of just Men made Perfect*. That which seems most surable to the Scope of the *Apostle*, in his dealing in particular with the *Hebrews*; is, That the whole Church of *Elect Believers* then in the World, consisting of *Jews and Gentiles*, should be designed by him in this Expression, *The First-born written in Heaven*. The Collection of the *Elect* among the *Jews and Gentiles* into one Body, one General Assembly, one Church, is what he celebrates as one of the greatest Mysteries of Divine Wisdom, which was hid in God from the Beginning of the World, and not till then revealed, *Ephes. 3. 4. — 10.* There is no Respect or Distinction of Nations, *Jews*, or *Gentiles* in this Assembly, *Revel. 5. 9. 10.* Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation, and hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests: Believers coming to this Assembly and Church of the *First-born*, whose

Hebrews XII. Verse 23.

23

whose Members were thus diffused through the World, is what he professes a great Privilege to these believing Hebrews: This he calls, *The making of man one new Adam, that he might reconcile both unto God in one Body*, Eph. 2. 15, 16. Now, their coming to this Assembly is opposed to their coming to Mount Sinai, that indeed was a *General Assembly* of all that People, Men, Women and Children, and it was a *Church*, Acts 7. 38. but of that People only, and that gathered to the dreadful and terrible Delivery of the Law: In opposition hereunto says the Apostle, *You Hebrews by Faith in Jesus Christ, are come to the General Assembly and Church of all, the Elect that are called throughout the World, ye and they being made one Body*; Yea, so strait is the Union between you, as *one new Adam is made of man, both equally reconciled to God and among your selves*. This is that Church to which all the Promises do belong, *The Church built on the Rock, against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail; the Spouse, the Body of Christ, the Temple of God, his Habitation for ever, the Church Christ loves and gives himself for*. This is the Church out of which none can be saved, and whereof no one Member can be lost.

Thirdly, It is to be considered, to what the Apostle does allude by these Expressions, *The First-born written in Heaven*. Here then there is a double Allusion, 1. To the Rights of the First-born in general, having an Eye to what he had said of prophane Esau, who had sold his Birth-right. These who are interested in the Gospel-Church, all of them have and do retain a Right unto the whole Inheritance, by their Adoption they come to have a Right to all that God has provided, and Christ has purchased, even to the whole Inheritance of Grace and Glory. 2. He alludes to the Enrolment of the First-born in the Wilderness, Numb. 3. 40, 41, 42. This is called, their Names being written in Heaven, Luke 10. 20. In the Book of Life, Phil. 4. 3. Revel. 3. 5, Chap. 13. 8, Chap. 17. 8, Chap. 21. 27. This Book of Life is no other but the Roll of God's Elect in the eternal and immutable Designation of them to Grace and Glory. From this Part of the Text already explained,

Observe 1. *That our Lord Jesus Christ has a Catholick Assembly, Inhabitants of this Heavenly City, with whom it is the high Privilege of Believers to be Incorporated, as Members of the same Society, into whose Communion they are admitted here below, as his Body the Fulness of him that filleth all in all, an Assembly gathered out of all Nations through the World, in all Ages, and Times*, Revel. 5. 9. A Part whereof is on Earth sitting for Heaven, and another Part triumphing in Glory. They are not incorporated into a particular Church, a straitned Society, as the Old Testament Church was; No, the General Assembly of Saints are more helpful to Holiness than a lesser Part, Psal. 22. 27, 28. Galat. 4. 25, — 28.

Observe 2. *That this Assembly is not a Row but a Church, such who are called out of the World by a holy Calling, subjecting themselves to Christ as to their Head, and are as quickened, so ordered and ruled by him: No Infant Church but come to rich Discoveries of the Mysteries of God made by Christ to them*, Heb. Chap. 5. 12, 13, Chap. 6. 1. Gal. 4. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Observe 3. *These who are Interested in this Gospel-Church, all of them have and do all retain a Right unto the whole Inheritance, all that God has provided and Christ has purchased for them, even Grace and Glory. The Members of this Assembly are all Partakers of Christ's Sonship and Primo-geniture, being Regenerated by him, and Dignified by and with his Birth-right Privileges*, Rom. 8. 17, — 29. Revel. 1. 6.

Observe 4. *The Members of this Assembly and Church, are not of an Earthly Extract and Enrolment registred on Earth, to know their Families and Descent, as at Sinai, whether right Jews and Priests or not, their Genealogy being preserved for that End*, Ezra 2. 62. But these First-born have

all of them their Father is Heaven, which is the Lord's Day of Rest, and
 Partakers of the divine Nature.

Objection, Injuncting and Promoting are these precious Privileges of every
 Christian's diligent Pursuit of Holiness? Pretend the

Observe 1. That the Lord Jesus has a Catholick Assembly, Inhabitants of this Heavenly
 City, with whom it is the high Privilege of Believers to be Disputants as Members of the same
 Society, into whose Communion they are admitted here below, as Members of his Body, an Assem-
 bly gathered out of all Nations throughout the World, in all Ages and Times.

That this Doctrine may be more Useful to you, I shall, First, Prove that there is
 such a General Assembly. Secondly, Shew how Believers are Incorporate into this excel-
 lent Society. Thirdly, Wherein the Greatness of this Privilege consisteth.

For the First: The Truth of this Note, that there is such an Assembly, is evident,

1. From many Texts of Scripture, of which I may name a few, as Psal. 22. 27. 28. All
 the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations
 shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the Governor among the nai-
 ons. Psal. 72. 8. 9. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River unto the
 ends of the earth: They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him. Verse 16. 17. The
 city shall flourish before him like the grass on the earth. Allen shall be blessed in him, and all
 nations shall call him blessed. Psal. 46. 5. God is in the midst of her: She shall not be moved:
 God shall help her. Psal. 84. 36. 37. His king shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun
 before me. — Isa. 45. 22. This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My spirit is that is upon
 thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth. Thou art departed out of thy mouth, nor out of
 the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and
 for ever. Matth. 16. 18. — Upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall
 not prevail against it. John 10. 16. Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also
 I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.
 2d, It is evident from Christ's Prayer and Intercession, in the Day of his Humiliation,
 he prayed, — Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that
 they may be one as we are. — Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall be-
 lieve on me through their word, John 17. 11, — 20. And when he is a Prince exalted, he
 makes his People willing by a Day of his Power, Psal. 110. 3. He liveth for ever to
 make Intercession for them, Hebr. 7. 25. 2d, Their eternal Vocation and Calling
 is the Porch and Entry into this General Assembly, Rom. 8. 30. Whom he did predestinate,
 them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he
 also glorified. 1 Cor. 1. 2. To the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sancti-
 fied in Christ Jesus, called to be saints: with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus
 Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. 3d, From the mutual Relation betwixt Christ and
 his Saints, he is their King and they his Subjects, Psal. 2. 6. Luke 1. 32, 33. Our glo-
 rious Monarch can never want Subjects. His Priesthood is Eternal, Heb. 7. 24, and there-
 fore must always have a Temple, which Temple Believers are, 1 Cor. 3. 17. He is also
 our Bridegroom and Husband, Hosea 2. 19. John 3. 29. and we are his Spouse contract-
 ed to him in the Church below, and the Marriage shall be consummate and compleat-
 ed in Glory. 5d, It is one Article of the Apostolick Belief or Creed, which has been
 acknowledged by Christians in all Ages, I believe the holy Catholick Church. If it be
 asked, Who are Members of this General Assembly and Church? Answer, Tho' all
 Hearers of the Gospel who profess Subjection thereto, are Members of the external vi-
 sible Church; yet none but real Saints are real Members of this invisible Church, this
 Assembly

Assembly of the First-born written in Heaven, they are a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People, to show forth the Praises of him who hath called you from darkness to light, 1 Pet. 2. 9. They are cleansed and justified by the Blood of Christ and sanctified by his Spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 11. They are Members of one Body, Rom. 12. 4. and are joined to Christ their only Head, Ephes. 4. 15.

Secondly, I am to shew how Believers are Incorporated into this excellent Society: Saints then become Members at Regeneration, when Nicodemus is to be Incorporated, our Lord tells him, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God, John 3. 3.* This is the Porch at which every one must enter in, before converting Grace come, *We are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, Eph. 2. 12.* But when ye become new creatures, then ye who are afar off, are made nigh through the blood of Christ, ye are Members of this General Assembly of the First-born. Faith is the great Bond of this Union on the Saints Part, *John 1. 12. To as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, 1 Cor. 1. 20.* And the Spirit on Christ's Part, *Rom. 8. 9, 10. 1 Cor. 6. 17. He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.* Upon this Incorporated Union follows a sweet Communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and also Communion with one another, all holding of one Head, being one Body. As Man's Body would soon dissolve if it were not coupled by Nerves, Sinews and Arteries; so this Union is attended with a Principle of Self-preservation, which consists in purging out every thing that is noxious to the Well-being of the Body, the Members of this General Assembly loathe what is opposite to Holiness: And in drawing in any thing that is for its Stability and Growth, feeding on Soul-sustaining Meals, at such solemn Occasions, when your Pot of Manna is set before you.

Thirdly, I am to tell you wherein the Greatness of this Privilege consists. To be Members of this Assembly must be a notable Mercy, because all such have a Right, 1. To the Comfort of the Experience of all the rest of the Saints, *James 5. 10. Take my brethren the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.* If ye keep their Road, whatever God has been to them, ye may expect he will be the same to you, the same as to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to Peter, Paul, and the rest of the Apostles, the same as to any of the Worthies of this Land, as to any eminent Ministers, or any of your godly Friends and Acquaintances; the Lord is as willing to perform his Promises to you as to them, and to help you in Distresses, as ever he helped any before you. 2. All the Members of this Assembly have a Right to a Communion of Gifts and Graces, that your *Pomeranates may bud, and your Spices flow out and give a goodly smell.* 3. To a Communion of Privileges, tho' there be many Complaints of Weakness in Grace and Attainments, yet if truly Incorporated as a Member of this Assembly, ye are thereby entitled to the same Privileges with Saints of the highest Size; among that large List of Worthies recorded, *Hebrews Chapter 11th.* there are some who out of Weakness became Strong, who are commended and rewarded as well as the strongest Champions. 4. Ye shall share of and have a Right to the Prayers of all the rest of the Saints through the whole Earth, it being common among them, that each one carries all the rest in his Arms to the Throne of Grace, *Praying for all Saints, Ephes. 6. 18.*

Observe 2. *This Assembly is no promiscuous Rabble or confused Run, but a Church that is an orderly and well governed Society, such as are singled out of the World by an holy Calling, subjected to Christ their Head, and are, as quickened, so ordered and ruled by him.* No Infant Church

Church but come to rich Discoveries of the Mysteries of God made by Christ to them; *Hebr. 5. 12, 13. Chap. 6. 1. Galat. 4. 1.*

The word *ekklesia* in profane Authors signifies an Assembly of Citizens, which by the Voice of the Cryer was called from their domestick Affairs, and the rest of the Multitude, to hear the Sentence of the Senate: Here it is taken for the Company of all the Faithful, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, *Matth. 16. 18. United as living Members to Christ their Head, Ephes. 2. 21, 22.*

Two things are here to be opened, *First*, The Nature of the Call to this Society; *Secondly*, Of the Head, who Rules, Governs, and Preserves the same.

As to the *First*, The Call, whereby the Members of this Society are singled out of this World, and made subject to Christ their Head, is a gracious and effectual Work of the Spirit of God, bringing Men to comply with the Offer of Christ in the Gospel. The External Call brings to a Profession, the Inward to a Possession of Christ. This Calling the Church, Building up, and Perfecting her, is a Work of all the Persons of the blessed God-head. The Father foreordained and determined her, *1 Peter 1. 20. Eph. 1. 4.* He bespoke her for himself, *At sundry times, and in diverse manners, and in these last days by his Son, Hebr. 1. 1, 2.* He made her over to Christ, *Psal. 2. 8. Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* The Son as a Prophet invites us to himself, and teaches the Doctrine of Salvation; His Voice we are to hear in all things whatsoever he shall say to us; And every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people, *Acts 3. 22, 23.* As a Priest he has laid down his Life for his Sheep, he has purchased his church with his own blood, *Acts 20. 28.* And as a King he Builds and Establishes her, *Ephes. 2. 20.* He defends her against the very gates of hell, *Matth. 16. 18.* He governs and preserves her as his own house, *Hebr. 2. 6. 1 Tim. 3. 15.* He enters into a Marriage-covenant with her, *Hosea 2. 19.* And in the End, Glorifies her, *Ephes. 5. 27.* The holy Spirit also reveals the Will and Mind of God to the Apostles, Prophets and Teachers, *Matth. 10. 20.* And by a Variety of Inward Operations advances a Work of Grace in the Hearts of Believers, convincing them of Sin and Misery, *John 16. 8.* Renewing their Natures, *John 3. 6.* mortifying their Lusts, *Rom. 8. 13.* Implanting the Habits of Grace, *Gal. 4. 22.* and exciting these to a lively Exercise, *Song 4. 16.* Assisting us in Duty, *Rom. 8. 26.* and affording Consolations suitable to our various Distresses, *John 14. 26.* In the Nature of this Call there is further considerable, what the Members of this Society are called from, and what they are called to; they are called from Sin, Ignorance and Unbelief, *1 Peter 1. 14.* From darkness to light, from the service of Satan to the service of the living God. From imminent and terrible Danger, as the Angel called Lot out of Sodom before the Brimstone-fire rained from Heaven on the City; so the Lord calls his People to embrace Salvation, before with the wicked World they fall headlong into the Pit of Perdition, from which there is no Recovery, *The lake that burns with fire and brimstone.* And he calls you from a present wicked World, *John 15. 19. Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* You are not Natives here, but Pilgrims, your Life, Trade, Comfort, and Delight is in Heaven above. That which ye are called to is Holiness, *1 Thes. 4. 7. For God has not called us to uncleanness but to Holiness.* This is their Liverty, *Isa. 63. 18.* They are anointed with the consecrating Oyl of the Spirit, *1 John 2. 27.* And they are called to Glory, *1 Thess. 2. 12. That ye would walk worthy of God who has called you to his kingdom and glory.* All the Members of this Church of the First-born, shall one Day sit on Thrones, with Palms in their Hands, and Crowns on their Heads, and be joined to the Spirits of just Men made Perfect.

Secondly,

Secondly, I am to tell you who is the Head who Rules, Governs and Preserves this Society, this Church of the First-born. Now this glorious Head is our Lord Jesus Christ, as is evident from Eph. 1. 22. *He gave him to be Head over all things to the Church.* All our Life, and Influences to maintain it come from him, as the animal Spirits flow from the natural Head, he has infinite Power fitting him for that Work, *For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead,* he is for ever inseparably unite to the Church, as the Head to the Body, and there can be no other Head but Christ! one Body with two Heads is a Monster in Nature, and it is impossible and unconceivable in this Case, that our Lord should have any Equal or Rival with whom he would share his Power, he is of the same Nature with the Members of his Mystical Body, *Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh,* Heb. 2. 17. As the Soul that resides in the Head influences the Members of the Body, so the same Spirit which is in Christ is also in Believers, Rom. 8. 9, 10, 11. And as the Head excels the rest of the Body which it Governs, Guides and Preserves; so does our blessed Redeemer, our glorious Head, far excell all Believers; he is the Ornament and Glory of his Church, which he Governs by his Word and Spirit, and saves by the Merits of his Death, Eph. 5. 23, — 27. O what a Privilege is it to be a Member of this glorious Church, of which he is the blessed Head and Governour, and to have a Right to the Privileges of the First-born. This leads to

Observation 2. *That all the Members of this General Assembly are Bairns, Children and Heirs of Christ's House, and their Right bears them to the whole Inheritance, all that God has provided, and Christ has purchased for them: They have a Right of Primogeniture to the Inheritance of the First-born.*

To open this Doctrine, I shall, 1. Shew how Believers come to this so near a Relation. 2. Wherein the Dignity of this Privilege consists, to be Sons and Heirs of God, and particularly to have a Right to the Privileges of the First-born.

As to the First, How come Believers to this so near a Relation to be the First-born written in Heaven? Answer 1. It is not merely by Creation, thus of all Men it is said, *Have we not all one Father,* Mal. 2. 10. But this yields little Comfort, for thus God is the Father of Devils, he made them, but will not save them. Neither is it by Nature, our blessed Lord is thus the alone Son of God, *Set up from everlasting, or ever the Earth was,* Prov. 8. 23. Poor we by Nature are Children of Wrath, even as others, Eph. 2. 3. But Positively, Believers come to be God's First-born and Heirs, 1. By Regeneration, 1 Pet. 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant Mercy has begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* 2. By Faith, Gal. 3. 26; *We are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus.* An Unbeliever may call God his Creator and Judge, but not his Father; Faith legitimates and makes us of the Blood-royal of Heaven, Baptism makes us Church Members, but Faith makes us Children, John 1. 12. Faith unites us to the Son of God, and so we become his Children, his adopted Sons.

Secondly, The Dignity of this Privilege to be Sons and Heirs appears to be very great, because, 1. *As a Father pitieth his Children, so does the Lord pity them that fear him,* Psal. 103. 13. *He spareth them as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him,* Mal. 3. 17. 2ly, As a Father provides Meat to his Bairns, so does the Lord feed us with hidden Manna the World knows not, with the Bread of Life which came down from Heaven, and gives Life to the World, which if a Man eat, he shall never hunger, John, Chap. 6. and he gives you to drink of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely, Rev. 21. 6. 3ly, He gives us not only Food, but also Clothing, Rev. 3. 18. *even the matchless Rob of Christ's spo-*

less Righteousness, *Rev. 19. 8.* this covers all their Sins, and all the Imperfections of our Duties, makes you beautiful in the Eyes of the Lord, fit to stand before his Throne, is put on in this Life, and worn by Saints through all Eternity. 4th. He also teaches his Children, his First-born, *Isa. 54. 13.* *All thy Children shall be taught of the Lord*; he teaches by his Word and Ordinances, and also by the inward Operations of his Spirit; *God who commanded Lights to shine out of Darkness, has shined into your Hearts to give the Lights of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ.* 5th. As a Father corrects his Children for their Good, so this is the great Design of all the Chastisements of Believers, *Heb. 12. 5, — 12.* for trying and improving their Graces, and preparing them for Glory; if he give us Wormwood to drink, he will mix it with Honey; the Rod in the Ark was laid up beside the Manna, with our Fathers Rod is always some Manna, he afflicts but in Measure, *Isa. 30. 11.* 6th. A tender Parent will hear the Cry of the Child; so does our gracious God hear the Prayers of his People, *Psal. 91. 15.* He will give them what they seek, or what is better for them; or if he delay, will make it for their Good. 7th. A kind Father will take notice of the least Good he sees in a Child; so did the Lord notice and commend even *David's* good Intention to build his House, *1 Kings 8. 18.* *Sarah's* Obedience, tho' mixed with Infirmary, and the Saints Charity is observed and rewarded beyond their Expectation, *Math. 25. 35, — 40.* These Duties we our selves Censure, God will Crown. 8th. A kind Father will keep off Danger from his Child; so will our God stand between us and all Hazard, *He will preserve us from all evil, Psal. 131. 7.* His Angels are our constant Lifeguard, *Heb. 1. 14.* and his watchful Providence is active for our Defence, *2 Chron. 16. 9.* 9th. If we be the Sons of God, he will give us Tokens of his Love, Returns of Prayer, Enlargements in it, Comforts in Distress, Peace of Conscience, Joy in the Holy Ghost, and Foretastes of Glory. The Lord knows we live in an unkind World, where we oft meet with Troubles and Calamities, which would make us sink, did not his Consolations support our Spirits. 10th. If ye be the Children of God, ye shall not want any good thing, *Psal. 34. 10.* Ye are Heirs of Promise, *Heb. 6. 17.* have a Right to the Promises of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come, *1 Tim. 4. 8.* The Promises are the Childrens Bread and Breasts for their Consolation, the Wicked can lay Claim to nothing in the Bible but Curses, but a Child of God may go to any Promise and pluck Comfort from it. 11th. God evidences unparalleled Love, by making you his Sons and Heirs, the First-born written in Heaven, for we by Nature were Children of Wrath, God stood in no need of us, he was infinitely Happy in himself, tho' all Mankind had perished: Yet that he should send his Son our Lord and Saviour by Death to purchase for us the Adoption of Sons, and give his holy Spirit to persuade us by Faith to accept the Privilege, is doubtless a Wonder of Mercy! and may be a Ground of Praise to Eternity. Our Lord is a Father beyond any in the World, other Parents may die and leave their Children, but the Lord will never forsake you, *Psal. 27. 16. Heb. 13. 5.* He is Eternal, Immortal and Unchangeable; other Parents may disinherit Children, but our Lord brings all his Sons to Glory, *Rom. 8. 29, 30.* Other Parents may take wrong Methods of instructing or correcting their Bairns, but our Lord is wonderful in Counsel, excellent in Working, and unerring in his Conduct. Finally, Other Parents cannot bestow the Privilege of First-born on all their Children, but our Lord will do it. And this leads me

More Particularly, To speak of the Privileges of the First-born, which we see from the Text every Believer has a Title to. This then is an Allusion to the Laws and Customs among

among the Jews concerning the First-born, recorded, Deut. 21. 17. Gen. 27. 36. And of these Privileges we may name these, 1. The First-born had a Princely Power and Dominion over his Brethren, who bowed down before him, he was next his Father in Honour: So Believers are made *Kings unto God*, Rev. 1. 6. they are *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, they have a Kingly Disposition to undervalue the things of a sublunary World; they have Attendants like, or beyond Kings, *Heb. 1. 14. The Angels are ministering Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation*; they obtain glorious Victories over Sin, Satan, the wicked World, Death, Hell and the Grave, and shall at length be crowned Conquerors: They are feasted with heavenly Manna, clothed with the Princely Robes of Christ's Righteousness, and are Expectants, and shall at last be possessed of the Kingdom of Glory. 2ly, The First-born were Priests in their Fathers Family till the Levites were instituted; so Believers are *Priests unto God*, Rev. 1. 6. *They are a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People, to shew forth the Praise of him who has called you out of Darkness into his marvellous Light. A holy Priesthood to offer up spiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 2. 3. 9. They are set apart for God's special Service, they are anointed with the anointing of the holy One that teacheth them all things: They have near Access to God's holy Place, are allowed to draw near with Boldness, and in full Assurance of Faith; they have put off the filthy Garments of Sin, and are clothed with the clean white Robes of Righteousness; and they are to offer acceptable Sacrifices, it is our Lord Jesus has offered the alone propitiatory Sacrifice, but we in Testimony of our Love and Gratitude to him, are to offer up our selves as living Sacrifices to serve him, Rom. 12. 1. are to offer up the Sacrifices of Prayer and Praise, Psal. 14. 3. Psal. 50. 14. are to give Charity to the Poor, Phil. 4. 18. and cheerfully to pay our Vows, with which Sacrifices God is well pleased.* 3ly, The First-born had the Inheritance, the rest had but a Piece of Money; and beside the Inheritance, they had a double Portion of Goods, Deut. 21. 17; So Believers have the Inheritance made over to them, the poor World has but a small Allowance, for all they have amounts to no more than *Pantry*, but how great Believers Portion is cannot be told, it is even an *Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, 1 Pet. 1. 4. where ye shall be like Christ, and infinitely Happy in the Enjoyment of him.* 4ly, The First-born had a Blessing annexed to them, they were blessed of their Father, when at the point of Death: So Believers are the blessed of the Lord, he before his Ascension *lift up his Hands and blessed them, Luke 24. 50. he is gone to Heaven, that thence he may pour down blessings on us. None can take either Birth-right or Blessing away from us, all Blessings, Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal are contained in our Lord's Testamentary Legacy, and confirmed by his Death, John 14. 27. Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you, not as the World giveth, give I unto you. Let not your Hearts be troubled, neither be afraid. O great sweet Blessing, that is never to depart from you; this may support your Hearts under present Troubles, and make you wait patiently for the Manifestation of the Sons of God in Glory.*

Use 1. Are all the Members of this General Assembly Children and Heirs of Christ's House, and have a Right to the Inheritance of the First-born? Then try if these Privileges belong to you, try by these Evidences, 1. Such are *born again, begotten to a lively Hope, 1 Pet. 1. 3. have past the Pangs of the new Birth, known some of the Terrors of Mount Sinai in Conviction and Humiliation, and are made new Creatures, their Minds enlightened in the Knowledge of Christ, and their Wills made subject to his Will: this they can say, Whereat once I was blind, now I see,* 2ly, Such have a Son-like Disposition,

tion, like a dutiful Child, you will melt with Tears for offending your Father; when Christ looked on Peter, he remembered his Sin and fell a weeping. *Clement of Alexandria* reports of him, *he never heard the Cock crow but he wept*: You will also sympathize with your Father, lay to Heart these things which tend to his Dishonour; *Rivers of Tears* (says David) *run down mine Eyes, because I see the wicked keep not thy Law*, *Plal. 119. 136.* You will love your Father with a superlative Love to him, and all that is like him, as to his Saints, to his Ordinances, and to his Presence; and you will Honour your Father, *Mal. 1. 6.* You will stand in Aw to sin against him, like Joseph, ye dare not venture on any Sin; *Gen. 39. 9. How shall I do this great Wickedness and sin against God?* 3y, A Child, a First-born resembles the Parent, in nothing ye can more resemble God than in Holiness, *Exod. 15. 11. 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16.* If ye be endeavouring to cleanse your selves from all filthiness of the Flesh and of the Spirit, and perfect Holiness in the fear of God, this is a good Sign. 4y, A First-born has his Father's Spirit in him, this is a Spirit of Prayer, *Gal. 4. 6.* it was a good Sign of Paul's Conversion, behold he prayeth, *Acts 9. 11.* God's Children can go to him boldly, can tell all their Complaints to him as a Child to a Father, and plead Promises and Arguments importunately with him, till they obtain the Mercy they desire. 5y, All God's Children have closed with Christ by Faith, *John 1. 12.* they have renounced Sin, Satan and the Flesh, have given themselves to God and his Service, and have accepted of Christ for Righteousness and Strength, and are daily employing him for all their Souls Wants. Now if ye can apply these Evidences to your selves, if ye find the Transcript of them on your own Experience; then may ye draw Comfort from this enriching Privilege, and what ye have heard preached on it, *Ye are come to the General Assembly and Church of the First-born which are written in Heaven.*

Use 2. Of Exhortation, and first, Let me exhort all you who are Hearers of this Gospel, to come and joyn your selves to this *General Assembly of the Church of the first-born*, by giving a Divorce to your Idols, and accepting our blessed Lord Jesus as your God and Portion on his own Terms. To move you to this Duty, consider, if ye refuse these Offers, ye do what ye can to dishonour God, to despise Christ, and slight the Motions of his Spirit, every Refusal is as a Sword piercing Christ's Heart, *Mark 3. 5. Turks, Tartars, Moors and Indians* may be admitted among the First-born before you, who now hear the Gospel, but refuse to obey its Voice, *Matth. 8. 11, 12. Many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven: But the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer Darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* But if ye accept these Offers, this will be the best Method ye can take to glorify God, *John 3. 33.* to bring Credit to Religion, and to make your selves happy in Time, and to Eternity: The Lord will have a glorious *General Assembly of the first-born* gathered through all the World, whether ye be Members of it or not; but for you to be assumed to that Society on Earth, and to joyn in the Song of the Redeemed, *Rev. 5. 9, 10.* at last, what infinite Joy will this afford! Therefore I charge and obtest you to accept these Offers made you in the Name of the Lord, that so ye may Share of this Happiness.

Secondly, Let me exhort you, Believers, who belong to this *Assembly of the First-born*, carry suitable to your great Privilege; and 1. Be thankful, admire the Love of God in admitting you to so near a Relation, *1 John. 3. 1: Behold, what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God.* 2y, Be of a Child-like Disposition, submitting patiently to his Will, even when correcting you; they are

Corrections

Consideration of a Passion this made Christ so patient, John 18. 11. *Shall not I drink the Cup which my Father hath given me?* Reverence him, Mal. 1. 6. Depend upon him for what ye want, he has promised, *They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing*, Phil. 34. 10. Be obedient to his Commands, 1 Peter 1. 14. Be Holy as he is holy, 14. 16. Look cheerful like the Sons, yea, like the First-born of such a noble beautiful Parent, shall the Sons of a King walk dejected, 2 Sam. 13. 4. *Why art thou being like the King's Son so lean?* Is God an unkind Father? Are his Commands grievous? Has he no Inheritance to give his first-born Heirs? *Why then are ye so sad?* 3. Pray for the Conversion and gathering in of all that belong to this General Assembly of the First-born: There are many Gentile Nations already converted throughout the World, of which we in this outmost Isle of the Sea (blessed be God) are a living Evidence; and we may expect the Conversion of more, when these Promises concerning the Jews shall be performed, which you may read in Ezek. 34. 23. Hosea 3. 5. Rom. 11. 26. 2 Cor. 3. 16. and concerning the Fulness of the Gentiles, Mal. 1. 11. Rom. 11. 24, 25. Revel. 11. 15. and Chap. 20. Let us then, if Incorporate in this Church, pray for the Good of the whole, and of every Member thereof; this will prove us to be kindly Sons of Zion. 4th, If ye be of the First-born that are written in Heaven, be Students of Heavenly-mindedness, *seek the things which are above*.

This leads me to
 Observ. 4. *That Believers the First-born are of no earthly Extract and Original, enrolled and registrate on Earth to know their Families and Descents, as at Sinai; Whether right Jews and Priests or no, their Genealogy being preserved for that End, Ezra 2. 62. But the First-born have all of them their Register in Heaven written in the Lamb's Book of Life, born of God, Partakers of the Divine Nature, highly and nobly Descended.*

I shall enquire what is imported, in this Expression, *Written in Heaven*, and explain the Particulars.

This Expression then imports, 1. Their divine Original and Extract, they are Heaven-Born, and of a Heavenly Disposition. 2. Tho' the World slight, undervalues and reproaches them here, yet their Master does exactly notice them under these, and shall hereafter solemnly avouch, vindicate and stand by them, owne them as his by Name and Sirname. 3. Their Certainty and Security of enjoying the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, they shall hold out and hold on till they gain Heaven. 4. The Lord's certain Knowledge of, and Acquaintance with them, as a Man knows these of his Family, whose Names he has written in a Book, 2 Tim. 2. 19.

I begin with the First, The Saints who are written in Heaven, are of a heavenly Original and Disposition: I might here shew wherein their divine Extract and Original expresses it self. Secondly, The Nature and Properties of this Sublime Disposition. Thirdly, How this heavenly Frame is wrought in them. Fourthly, In what Respects Believers are thus Heavenly. And Fifthly, Apply the whole.

As to the First, This divine Extract and Original expresses it self, 1. In our having our future State and Happiness much in our Eye, Phil. 3. 13, 14. *But thus one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* 2. In being much Conversant in the Way that leads to Heaven, in Duties and Ordinances, aiming and seeking Communion with God in them all, thus mounting up through the Wilderness by Advances in Holiness, in a direct Line ascending the Mount of God, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrror and frankincense, and with all the powers of the merchant, Song 3. 6. 3. In endeavouring a Conformity betwixt us and these in Heaven, to behave like these who are Burgesses of the Jerusalem above

above, Phil. 3. 20. 4. In our being off in Heaven as to our *Hearts and Affections, Delights and Desires*, even while on Earth; more than one Half to be in Heaven, 2 Cor. 5. 8. *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* To Converſe more where we Love than where we Live, keeping up cloſe Converſe and Correſpondence with Heaven.

Secondly, I am to declare the Nature and Properties of this heavenly Nature and Diſpoſition. It conſiſts then in that wonderful Change which the Spirit of God makes on the Frame and Temper of the Soul, by infuſing and planting the Principles of Grace in all the Powers and Faculties thereof. More Particularly, the Nature of this heavenly Diſpoſition, may appear from its deſirable Properties, 1. It is Heavenly and Divine, they have a Transcript of Heaven writ on them, are *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2 Peter 1: 4. Not Eſſentially, for ſo it is wholly Incommunicable to the Creature; nor Hypoſtatically or Perſonally, for ſo Chriſt only is Partaker of it; but by Inhabitation of the Spirit of God in us, 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? — For the temple of God is holy, whoſe temple ye are.* 2. It is the moſt Excellent and Tranſcendent that any Creature can have in the World, far Surmounting the Natural and Moral Life of the Unſanctified; they that live Senſually are dead while they live, 1 Tim. 5. 6. 3. It is a moſt pleaſant Life, all Pleaſures and Joys which are not phantaſtick, have their Spring from this, Rom. 8. 6. *To be ſpiritually-minded is life and peace.* It affords a moſt Serene and Placid Life, *A ſtranger intermeddles not with their Joy*, Prov. 14. 10. *When the Scold is converted, then they begin to be merry*, Luke 15. 24. *never a real merry Day till then.* 4. It is growing and encreaſing like a well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life, John 4. 14. *The inward man is renewed day by day*, 2 Cor. 4. 16. 5. It is Conſtant and Perpetual, yes, Everlaſting and Eternal, tho' in this Life the beſt Frame be changeable, yet the Seeds of this Divine Diſpoſition ever abides in the Soul.

Thirdly, I am to ſhew how this Heavenly Diſpoſition is wrought in the Soul, 1. Then it is wrought *Mysteriouſly*, John 3. 8. *The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heaſt the ſound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit.* We cannot ſolve this Phenomenon by the Laws of Nature. But 2. God has revealed it to us by his Word, Ephes. 2. 10. *We are his workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God has before ordained, that we ſhould walk in them.* Eph. 1. 19: *His mighty power works in us to believe*, 2 Cor. 5. 5. *Now be that has wrought ſuch the ſelf ſame thing is God who alſo hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.* 3. It is wrought in all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul, 1 Theſſ. 5. 23. *And the very God of peace ſanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole Spirit, and ſoul, and body, be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* The whole Soul and Spirit is the Recipient Subject of this Work of Grace, hence it is called a *new Creature*, and a *new Adam*. 4. It is wrought Inſtantly, as all Creation Work is; hence it is reſembled to that Plaftick Power, which in a Moment made Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs: Juſt ſo does God ſhine into our Hearts, 2 Cor. 4. 6. It is true, that before this bleſſed Moment a Soul may be long under the Preparatory Works of the Spirit of Conviction, Humiliation, and Self-abatement; but the Infuſion of Grace, the Powerful Perſuaſion to accept of the offered Salvation, is inſtantly performed.

Fourthly, I am to tell in what Reſpects Believers are thus Heavenly, Firſt. Then, in reſpect of the Change of their Nature, as has been already declared. 2. In reſpect of an holy Frame and divine Set of Heart, free from theſe diſtempering Paſſions the Men of this World are enſlaved and hurried with. But what might have been further ſaid

Hebrews XII. Verse 23.

319

on this Subject, and on the Application of this Point, see in *Observ. 6th*, on Verse 22. *The Heavenly Jerusalem*. Therefore I now pass to

The second thing imported in this Expression, *Which are written in Heaven*, viz. That tho' the World slights, undervalues, and reproaches the People of God, yet their noble Master does exactly notice them under these, and shall hereafter solemnly avouch, vindicate, and stand by them, own them as his by Name and Surname, having them all written down fair in Heaven's Register, not a Blot on them there, without spot and wrinkle; and even here, *He sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel*.

I may here, *First*, Shew how the Lord notices his People under Sights and Reproaches from the World, *Secondly*, Why he so exactly observes them. *Thirdly*, What Advantage and Comfort redounds to them from the same.

As to the *First*, The Lord notices his People under Sights and Reproaches from the World, 1. So as the World cannot cast one Affront or Reproach more on them, than what he wisely measures out in order to a Design of Love on them: The Churches Affliction is but for a limited time, *Rev. 2. 10. Ye shall have tribulation ten days*. 2. So soon as this gracious End is reached, these Afflictions shall cease. 3. He suggests Cordials and furnishes Preservatives for their Support while under the World's Reproaches, Harassings and Trials: Tho' he sift them, yet one Grain shall not fall to the Ground, *Isa. 43. 2, 3. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; For I am the Lord thy God, the holy One of Israel, thy Saviour*. 4. When at their worst from the World, he is Advocating their Cause at the Bar of Heaven, for Recruits and fresh Auxiliaries, to prevent their Fainting or Sinking, and to Strengthen them in their Duty.

Secondly, The Reasons why he so exactly notices them are, 1. Because they stand in so near a Relation to him, they are the Fruit and Travail of his Soul, they are his Children, his Sons and Daughters, his near Friends, yea, his Spouse. 2. Because he is to answer for them all, his Faithfulness is lying in Pawn for every Straggling in *Sion's Camp*, *None of his sheep can be plucked out of his hand*, *Joh. 10. 28*. 3. They are in no Capacity to do for themselves, and others would condemn them, because not of the World, if their Lord and Master did not exactly notice them. 4. That he may demonstrate as to themselves, so to others, what special Care and Kindness he has for them. 5. That this may oblige and encourage them to Praise him as here, so for ever hereafter; to Extol him who has Supported and Comforted them under all their Tossings in a weary World, and in end landed them safe at Glory.

Thirdly, Hence great Advantage and Comfort redounds to the People of God; For 1. Hereby they see their Master sends them not a Warfare on their own Charges, but largely deputes on their Account on every Occasion. 2. Hereby they are made to keep an Eye on himself, and look beyond second Causes of their Trouble. 3. He not only narrowly Notices them here, but will also Vindicate them hereafter; even in this Life he is not ashamed of, nor will not disown his own People; yea, he now stands engaged to appear in his Providence for them, for it is beyond Mens reach to escape the Danger imminent to his Work, therefore he will put to his own Hand, there is an high Indignity offered to precious Christ, which he cannot pass without resenting, the main Thing this Day amissing he is able to give; namely, *To pour out the Spirit from on High*: And there is a godly Remnant yet in the Land, whose Hearts are like to break for his Absence, and who are close pleading for his Return over Mountains of Provocation. Therefore he

will yet appear and vindicate the Cause that is his own, and owe his People, whose Names are written in Heaven, against all the Reproaches and Indignities the World can cast at them.

The third Thing imported in this Expression, *Which are written in Heaven*, is, The infallible Certainty and Security of their obtaining the Prize, *far landing at Jerusalem above*; they shall hold out, and hold on till they be safely arrived, whatever Oppositions and Storms may occur betwixt them and their Father's House, yet at length they shall be safe Housed in the Galleries of everlasting Delight; for their Names are written in Heaven, in testimony that themselves shall inevitably follow: Come in their way what will, they may boast, *Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ, shall Tribulation or Distress, — Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us*, Rom. 8: 35. — 37.

To make evident the Truth of this Note, Consider *First*, The Union betwixt Christ and his People is Indissoluble, the Covenant of Grace which the Believer accepts of is Everlasting, let Devils and Men do their utmost, this Relation will stand. It is like a Marriage knot, like the Union betwixt the Body and the Members, 1 Cor. 12. 12. Betwixt a Foundation and Building, Christ the Foundation, we the Superstructure, Christ the Food, we the Body nourished thereby, John 6. 55, 56. Yea, its more inseparable than any of these, like the very Oneness that is betwixt the Father and the Son, John 17. 21, 22, 23. It casts both Parties into one Mould, it is a Real not Imaginary Relation, it makes over and transfers a real Right of the One to the Other, it is Mutual, they and all that is their own becomes Christ's, and he and all his Perfections becomes theirs; it is warmly and affectionately attended with all the Fruits of sweetest Love, Song 2. 14. Chap. 8. 1. and it is Perpetual, your Names are written in Heaven, never to be blotted out nor forgotten. *Secondly*, That Believers shall certainly be landed in Heaven above, is evident from the Lord's Providential Care of them, 1 Peter 5. 7. *Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you*. See his Wisdom in the way of dispensing his Mercies to you, if one Comfort be cut off another is raised in its stead: See his Condescendency in answering your Requests, Psal. 34. 6. and 116. 1. See how wisely he carves out your Afflictions and Crosses in the Kind of them, *This and not Another*; in the Time, *Now and not at another Season*; in the Degree, in *This and not in a Greater*; in the Supports given you under them, and in the End, God's Glory and your Good: And after all, put the Question to thy Soul God puts to *Jonah*, *Does thou well to be angry?* Nay rather, be not all these lively Symptoms that thy Name is in the Lamb's Book of Life, and in due time thou shalt be brought to endless Glory? *Thirdly*, The same Truth is evident from God's Faithfulness, which is set in the Frontispiece of all the Promises, 1 Cor. 1. 9. *God is faithful, by whom ye were called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who will confirm you to the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*. And the same you may read, Phil. 1. 6. and John 13. 1. *Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end*. The Promise which he made to *Moses*, and confirmed to *Joshua* and others, stands good to all Believers, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. *Fourthly*, Our Lord's almighty Power is interposed to secure the Saints Perseverance, 1 Peter 1. 5. *None can ruine these whom Omnipotency has undertaken to defend*. *Fifthly*, The same is secured by the effectual Mediation and Intercession of Christ, Rom. 8: 33, 34. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*. *Sixthly*, By the Spirit of Christ dwelling and abiding

abiding in you, he has begun his Saving Work in you, his Honour is paused to perfect it, the Reproach of the Foolish Builder shall never ly on him, the Grace given thee has the Nature of a Seal, Pledge and Earnest of the whole, *Rom. 8. 23. 2 Cor. 1. 22.* so that it cannot fail.

What has been said on this Point may afford great Consolation to Believers; how should it refresh your drooping Souls, and make you gird up the Loins of your Minds, seeing ye do not run as uncertain, neither fight as those that beat the Air, but are assured by the foresaid Grounds of enjoying the Inheritance; O bless the Lord! Some may object, Ah the Lord seems to be departed from my Soul, God is far away, and I am plunged in the Waters of *Marah*, I am like *Saul* when the *Philistines* came upon him, and the Lord had departed from him, wherefore I fear I will never win through these Deeps? *Answer* 1. Take Courage, Matters are not so bad perhaps as ye apprehend: There be two ways of divine Desertion, the one is absolute, they shall never see his Face any more; the other is limited, and so for a time he forlook his own Son, when he cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And of this Sort is the Desertions of the Elect, some are only *Cautional* to prevent Sin, some *Probational* to try Grace, others *Castigatory* to chastise Negligence, and these be no new nor strange things to the People of God. 2ly, These will make thee hold Christ the faster, and prize his Presence at the higher Rate when he returns, he shall be as a Bundle of Myrrhe unto thee. 3ly, It is but a little Cloud, and shall soon blow over, *Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy cometh in the Morning, Psal. 30. 5.* For a small Moment have I forsaken thee, but with great Mercies will I gather thee. In a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee, for a Moment; but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer, *Isa. 54. 7, 8.* 4ly, The Light of his Countenance shall not only be restored certainly, but seasonably, when thy Darkness is at the greatest, thy Trouble is at the highest, and Hopes at the lowest, he is a God of Judgment, and knows how to time his own Mercies, *Psal. 138. 3.* *Psal. 40. 1, 4.* When sinking in the deep Mire, he will set thy Feet on a Rock, and put a new Song in thy Mouth. So notwithstanding of present Desertions, thy Name is still written in Heaven, thou shalt be sure of reaching there at length; and even in time has this Comfort, thy merciful Lord knows thee, and all thy Condition, far more accurately as any Man can know his Family or Flock, whose Names are written in a Book before him. So much for the first Part of this Text, To the General Assembly and Church of the First-born which are written in Heaven.

The next thing in the Words the Apostle proceeds to mind us of, is, the supream Head of this holy Society, which is God himself, *And to God the Judge of all.* In the Enumeration of the glorious Privileges which belong to the New Testament Church, the Apostle mentions the Relation God stands under to this Society, to beget in Believers a due Reverence of what they are called unto therein. Where we find, 1. That Believers have a peculiar Access unto God. 2. That they have it unto him as the Judge of all. This Access to God through Christ is oft mentioned in Scripture as an high and eminent Privilege, and it has two Parts, 1. Access to his Grace and Favour by Justification. 2. Access to him and the Throne of his Grace with Liberty and Boldness in divine Worship, in Duties and Ordinances, *Eph. 2. 18. Heb. 4. 15, 16.* The Access in the Text is to God as the Judge of all: If it be enquired, How is this a Privilege, seeing all must appear before his Judgment-Seat? *Answer*, It is one thing to be brought before a Judge tried as a Criminal, and sentenced; and another thing to have favourable Access to him, as our Occasions do require. This is the Privilege here intended.

intended, that we have Liberty and Freedom to draw near to God, even as he is the Judge of all, which no others have, nor can pretend to. To this Access is necessarily supposed Pardon of our Sins, Justification of our Persons, and Sanctification of our Natures; without which, no Man can behold God as a Judge, but unto his Confusion. Here then is a double Consideration of God as a Judge, which makes it our great Privilege to have Access to him as such, 1. That he will judge the Cause of the Church against the World, tho' their Cause be cast here by those who pretend to judge them, yet they have Access to his Throne, their Sentence shall come forth from his Presence, *Mica. 7. 9, 10. Rev. 16. 5, 6, 7.* 2. That he as a righteous Judge will give them their Reward at the last Day. From this Part of the Text now explained,

Observe 1. *That the great and glorious Jehovah will be the Judge of all, and of every particular Person, Man or Woman.*

Observe 2. *That now in Christ Jesus under the Gospel-State, there is free Access to God, and this without any discouraging Dread or Terror.*

I return to Observe. 1. *That the great and glorious God will be the Judge of all Persons that ever were, are, or shall be in the World.* *Psal. 90. 6. God is Judge himself, Psal. 98. 9.—The Lord comes to judge the Earth, with Righteousness shall he judge the World, and the People with Equity.*

To prepare this Note for your Use, I shall, 1. Speak of the Judge. 2. Of the Judgment to be passed. 3. Of the Evidence or Grounds on which they will be judged. 4. The Parties to be judged. 5. About what they are to be judged.

First, Concerning the Judge I offer these Remarks, 1. To judge the World is attributed sometimes to God, essentially considered, to the whole Trinity, *Deut. 32. 36: The Lord shall judge his People, Psal. 9. 8. He shall judge the World in Righteousness; Psal. 82. 8. Psal. 99. 8. Eccl. 12. 14. Rom. 2. 5.* Sometimes it is ascribed to the Father, *Matth. 22. 13. Then said the King to his Servants, Bind him Hand and Foot, cast him to outer Darkness, John 8. 50. I seek not mine own Glory, (says Christ) there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Acts 17. 31. He hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the World; 1 Pet. 2. 23. When he (our blessed Lord Jesus) was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened us; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* Sometimes it is ascribed to the Son, *Rom. 14. 10. We shall all stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ, John 5. 22. The Father judgeth no Man, but has committed all Judgment to the Son, and sometimes to the holy Spirit, Isa. 44. 4. John 16. 8, 11.* In a Word, to judge the World belongs to the whole Trinity, as to the judicary Power and Authority in Determination; but to the Son as to the visible and external Execution of this Power and Authority. 2ly, It is to be considered, that God being invisible in his own Nature has most wisely ordained the last Judgment of the World to be transacted by a visible Person; Man is to be judged, and the Process will be on things done in the Body. The Person Commissionate to act this great Work is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God united to the humane Nature, *Acts 17. 31. He hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given Assurance to all Men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. John 5. 22. The Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son. Verse 25. 27. And hath given him Authority to execute Judgment, because he is the Son of Man.* The Quality of the Office requires no less Person to exercise it than this Son of God; and that, 1. Because of its superlative Dignity, no meer Creature is capable of so glorious a Commission, to pass a sovereign and eternal Sentence on Angels and Men, it is a Royalty reserved

for God himself; no other can open the Books of his eternal Councils, but only he who was in the Bosom of the Father. 27. Because of the immense Dignity, no mere Creature is able to discharge it. To judge the World is to pass a righteous and irrevocable Sentence on all Men, and actually to execute the same; and for this no less than infinite Wisdom, and infinite Power are Necessary; all Angels in Heaven could not manage the Trial of one Man, for beside innumerable Omissions and Commissions, the secret of the Heart whence Guilt or Goodness of moral Actions is derived, are not open to them. 28. Our Lord is invested with this high Office, as the Reward of his Sufferings, Phil. 2. 8, 9, 10. — *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name; That at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth: And that every Tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.* This promised Reward is not fully performed before the general Judgement, when all Creatures shall tremble before their Judge. Now, that our Lord shall be this Judge, is further evident. 1. From his Designations, Rom. 8. 3. — *One like the Son of Man, came with the Clouds of Heaven, — And there was given him Dominion and Glory.* Act. 10. 42. *He is ordained to be the Judge of Quick and Dead.* 1 Thess. 4. 16. *The Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Arch-angel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.* 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8. — *10. — The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel: — When he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe.* 29. From the Manner of his Appearance, he is to descend from Heaven, to come in the Clouds, to come with Power and great Glory, to sit on the Throne of his Glory, to be seen by all, to be terrible to the wicked, they cry for Hills and Mountains to cover them from the Face of the Lord, and to give a sweet Welcome to all the Elect, as is described in many Texts of Scripture, 1 Thess. 4. 16. Dan. 7. 13. Matth. 24. 30. Rev. 1. 7. Rev. 6. 16. Matth. 25. 31. 30. From the Execution of his Mediatorial Office; he is King over the Elect World, Psal. 2. 6. and to him belongs the Kingdom, Government and Judgment. Thirdly, Consider how well qualified this Judge is for executing his Office, he is arrayed with splendid Glory, he comes not now in a lowly State, as in the Days of his Humiliation, but *He comes with the Glory of his Father, and of his Angels, to reward every Man according to his Works.* Matth. 16. 27. He is the All-seeing and Heart-searching Jehovah, *whose whole Eye all things are open, naked and bare.* Heb. 4. 13. *He is the only wise God.* Rom. 16. 27. infinitely more may be said of him than of Solomon, 1 Kings 3. 12. He has a wise Heart, none like him before, nor after him. He is Just and Righteous, cannot pass a wrong Sentence, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Gen. 18. 25. and he is clothed with omnipotent irresistible Power to execute his Sentence, *The Son of Man shall come in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory.* Matth. 24. 30. *The Wicked shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power.* 2 Thess. 1. 9. there can be no rising up nor rebelling against him at that Day, all must stoop and bow before his glorious Majesty.

Secondly, I proposed to speak of the Judgment or Sentence to be passed. On this Subject consider, 1. There be several Times and Degrees of pronouncing Sentence on Sinners, as it is either pronounced on the Communion of Sin by Conscience God's Deputy in this Life; thus the very Conscience of Heathens bear Witness, and their Thoughts accuse or cross one another, Rom. 2. 15. Or it is pronounced at the time of Death,

Death, when the Soul is about to go from the Body, *This Night the Soul shall be taken from thee*; Or at the last great and general Judgment, when the General Assembly of Men and Angels shall be cited before God the Judge of all. 2ly, Consider the Properties of this Sentence, it will be most solemn, the Trumpet shall sound to Summon all the World before the Judge, *1 Thess. 4. 16.* It will be most universal, *We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, 2 Cor. 5. 10.* Kings, Princes, high and low Persons of whatever Degree. It will be most Impartial, *Acts 17. 31.* — *He will judge the World in Righteousness*; there shall be no Bribes in this Court, Friendship nor Favour will never go here. It will be most Exact and Critical, *He will thoroughly purge his Floor*, not a Grace, nor a Sin but his Fan will discover it, he will judge the Heart as well as the Face. And this Day of solemn Sentence and Trial as it will be terrible to the Wicked, so comfortable to the Godly. Most comfortable to them, for it is a time of refreshing from the Presence of the Lord, *Acts 3. 19.* It is the time when their Redemption draws nigh, *Luke. 21. 28.* A time of Consolation and Joy, *Isa. 65. 13, 14.* And in a Word, a time when they shall meet Christ their Bridegroom and Husband, shall be openly owned and acknowledged by him, and received to be Sharers of everlasting Glory with him to all Eternity. But it is a terrible Day for the Wicked, a Day of Trouble, of treading down, and of Perplexity, *Isa. 22. 5.* The Day of the Lord's Vengeance, and the Year of Recompence, *Isa. 34. 8.* A Day of Tribulation and Anguish, *Rom. 2. 9.* Of Blackness and thick Darkness, yea of Roaring, Crying and Terror; a Day that makes the Earth to shake, *Joel 3. 16.* and a Day of the Perdition of the Ungodly, *2 Pet. 3. 7.* for then they shall be forced to stand before their Judge, to receive their Sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels, and then the Devils shall take them and bind them hand and foot, and cast them into utter Darkness, where shall be weeping, moaning, and gnashing of Teeth.*

Thirdly, I proposed to speak of the Evidences and Grounds on which the Judgment and Sentence will pass. This Sentence then will proceed on the Equity of God's Law, the Rule of the great and final Judgment; and 1. The Law of Nature which is the Rule of Duty, will be the Law of his Judgment; for *without the Law there is no Transgression.* 2. The Law of Faith which proposes merciful Conditions to the Guilty, on Performance whereof they may plead their Pardon sealed with the Blood of their Redeemer: The Gospel is called the Law of Liberty, *Jam. 2. 12.* in it the Grace of God richly shines, for when our Innocence was lost, the Lord allows the Renovation of the Sinner by Repentance, to which the plenary Pardon of Sin is assured, *Isa. 1. 16, 17, 18.* Sincerity of Obedience is accepted, whereby all known Duty is embraced, and known Sin disclaimed; when Perfection is wanting, and unfeigned Faith in Jesus Christ becomes the great Condition of the Covenant, such a Belief of the Truth and Goodness of the Promises as induces us to receive him as our King and Prince, as our Righteousness and Strength, as purifie the Conscience, Heart, Life, Will and Affections; this frees us from Hell, and entitles us to Heaven, according to this blessed Gospel Covenant. 2ly, The Judgment will proceed and pass on the Evidence of Facts produced as the Reason of the Sentence; thus was Adam convicted, *Gen. 3. 11.* and Sodom, *Gen. 18. 20, 21.* and Balaam, *Dan. 5. 9.* So at last all the Works of Man shall be brought into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil, *Ecc. 12. last.* All things must be accounted for, *Rom. 2. 16.* God will judge the secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel. The Manner of the Evidence is set out to us by opening the Books, *Rev. 20. 12.* as 1. The Book of the Law and Gospel in all their Injunctions and Prohibitions, and our

Hebrews XII. Verse 23.

Lives compared with them, *John* 5. 45. and 12. 48. 2. The Book of God's Omniscience, *All things are open, naked and bare before him*, *Hebr.* 4. 13. *Darkness hides not from him, but Night shines as the Day*; and his Light and transcendent Brightness is Invisible to us, *1 Tim.* 6. 16. 3. The Book of Conscience will then be opened, and give an Accusing or Excusing Testimony of every thing *Rom* 2. 15, 16. this will Ratify the Sentence pass by the great Judge. 4. Other innumerable Witnesses will appear on that Day to finish the Process of it, especially for the publick Conviction of the Wicked. The Devil will then bring in a bloody Charge against them of all their Guilt, and how easily tempted to it. The Wicked themselves who have been joynt in Commission of Sin, will accuse one another. All the Servants of God, who have by their Instructions, Counsels, Admonitions, and Examples, endeavoured to Reclaim them, will give a heavy Testimony against them. The Scripture assigns to Mens Sins a yocal Evidence against them: Thus the Prophet speaking of a House built by Rapine and Extortion, says, *The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it*, *Habak.* 2. 11. Thus to accuse the unrighteous Builder, so the Wages of the Hireling unjustly detained, and the Gold of the Covetous has a crying Voice, *James* 5. 3, 4. The Wounds of Christ will also bring in a fearful Charge against the Wicked, *Revel.* 1. 7. *Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, even so, Amen.* And the very Benefits God has bestowed on them, will bear Testimony against their Wickedness, *Matth.* 25. 41, 46.

Fourthly, The Parties to be judged are either Men of all Kinds and Degrees, *2 Cor.* 5. 10. Or Angels, *1 Cor.* 6. 2. *2 Peter* 2. 4.

Fifthly, The Matters about which they are to be judged, are either, 1. Ignorance and Unbelief, the great Mother-Sin which is the Spring and Rise of all the rest, *2 Thess.* 1. 7, 8. — *The Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Or 2. They will be judged concerning their Works and Actions as Effects of Unbelief; thus we see the Tenor of the Judgment proceeds, *Matth.* 25. 41. *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, — For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. — And in as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.* *2 Cor.* 5. 10. *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* 3. Men shall be judged concerning their Words, *Matth.* 12. 36. *I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* Yea, 4. Their very Thoughts shall be judged, *All things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do: he is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the Heart.* *Hebr.* 4. 12, 13. *At that Day, The Heavens shall reveal the iniquity of the wicked: and the earth shall rise up against him,* *Job* 20. 27.

If it be asked, Whether the Sins of the Godly shall be openly published in the Day of Judgment? I Answer, Whether they be or not, this will not Impare or Diminish, but rather increase the Comfort and Happiness of Believers: But I incline to go in to their Opinion, who think they shall not be made mention of, and that on these Grounds, 1. In the Account the Gospel gives of the great Judgment, *Matthew* Chap. 25. we have their Good mentioned, but none of their Evil. 2. He has promised, *Isa.* 43. 25. *I will not remember thy sins.* *Ezek.* 18. 22. *All his transgressions that he hath committed, they*

they shall not be mentioned unto him. 3. Having promised not to mention, he is Unchangeable, *Numb. 23. 19.* God is not a Man, that he should lie, neither the Son of Man, that he should repent: Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? 4. He stands well affected and related to them as their Saviour and Redeemer, *Luke 21. 28. Rom. 8. 23.* As their Advocate and Intercessor, *Rom. 8. 34. 1 John 2. 1.* And as engaged to confer the Crown on them, *2 Tim. 4. 8. Revel. 2. 10.* 5. Christ has made full and compleat Satisfaction for their Sins, *Isa. 53. 5.* and this they have applied by Faith, *Rom. 3. 25.* and so their State is a State of Salvation, They shall not come to condemnation, but are passed from death to life, *John 5. 24.* 6. The Ignominy of their Sins being exposed, appears contrair to the glorious State of their Absolution at the great Day, mentioned *1 Cor. 15. 44. Coloss. 3. 4. 1 John 3. 2.*

Inference 1. Is God the great Judge of all Persons, then let us have the Faith of this great Truth confirmed, and by frequent and serious Thoughts applied to our own Souls, To deny this is expressly contrair to the implanted Notion of a Deity on the Heart of Man. Divine Revelation, as ye have already heard, does fully confirm the Truth of the Doctrine. The Conduct of Providence makes it necessar, since the Godly are oft afflicted, and the Wicked flourish in the World, that there should be a Day of Recompence, wherein the Wicked shall receive their deserved Punishments, and the Godly the Rewards promised them. This the Conscience of very Heathens has witnessed, *Rom. 2. 15, 16.* Hence Heathens talked of *Aacus, Rhadamanthus, and Minos* their Judges after Death. But we have a more sure word of prophesie, assuring us we must all appear before God the Judge of all. If this Truth were cordially believed, it would influence your Souls to consider more seriously your eternal Concerns, it would restrain from secret Sins, and be a Remedy against sensual Temptations, Secrecy emboldens Sinners, but did they think of the Account they are to give to the Judge of Quick and Dead, when their Sins shall be discovered to their eternal Confusion before God, Angels and Men, and they condemned for the same, they durst not adventure upon them. Yea, the Belief of this Truth would engage you to the Study of Holiness, *2 Peter 3. 11.* Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness.

Inference 2. Is God the great Judge of all, then the graceless World have Ground to be afraid and terrified what shall become of you at that Day! Particularly such as never repented of all Sin, as dishonouring and displeasing to a holy God, — we shall perish, *Luke 13. 3.* Such as never believed on Jesus Christ, never received him as your God and Portion, your Righteousness and Strength, the wrath of God abides on you, *John 3. 36.* Such as never were renewed by Grace, ye cannot enter the kingdom, *John 3. 3.* Such as know not God, and obey not the Gospel, the Lord will take vengeance on you in flaming fire, *2 Thess. 1. 8.* And such as love not our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, shall be Anathema, *Maran-atha,* *1 Cor. 16. 22.* That is, Let him be accursed till the coming of the Lord, or till the Lord come and take vengeance on him. How miserable will such be at that Day? they shall be clothed with the Devil's Image abhorring God, and abhorred of him, the Sight of Christ shall strike them with Terror, they shall be Speechless, Helpless, and Hopeless. O what pale Faces, hanging down Heads, quivering Lips, knocking Knees, fainting Hearts, and roaring Consciences will be among them that Day? What will become of you, when God shall condemn you from above, the World round about shall be in Flames ready to devour you, Conscience from within shall ratifie the Sentence, the Devils shall execute it, and Hell from below shall be opened wide to receive you.

O Christless Souls answer me, Think ye it possible to avoid Judgment after the terrible Citation by the Trump of God? Nay, there is a Necessity ye must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, 1st Cor. 5. 10. If ye appear, are there no Accusers, no Witnesses will confront you in that Court? Nay, to be sure, God, Satan, Conscience, Ministers, your wicked Companions, yea, your very Relations will accuse you at that Day: What will ye have to plead for your selves? Nothing, but like the Man without the Wedding-garment, stand Speechless, *Matth. 22. 12.* If no Defence be left thee, what can retard the Sentence? Must he not render according to your Deeds? If the Sentence be once past by Christ, what can hinder the Execution of it? will he alter the Word that is gone out of his Mouth? No, no, May ye think Cries and Tears will do it then? No, *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Then will our Lord profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity, Matth. 7. 22, 23.*

Inference 3: Let us prepare to meet with God the great Judge; Let us be diligent to be found of him in peace, that a regenerating Work of Grace be wrought in our Souls, that we be united to Christ by a lively Faith, that Pardon of Sin may be intimate to the Conscience; that we be constant in watching over our own Hearts and Ways, that Sin be subdued, and Grace nourished; and that ye live every Day as your last. Call in thy Self-Reflecting and Considering Powers, get alone, and forgetting all other things, think of this eternal Concern, the State of thine own Soul. O let not the Trifles of Time wipe off the Impressions of Death, Judgment, and Eternity! O that long word *Eternity*, that it might be Night and Day on thy Heart!

To press this Preparation, Consider 1. The Misery of these who are unprepared, they will lose all their external Comforts and Enjoyments, Riches, Relations, Pleasures and Profits: They will lose all Seasons and Opportunities of Grace, the Offers of Mercy, the Entreaties of Ministers, Motions of the Spirit, and Invitations to come to Christ; then the Door on these shall be for ever shut. They will lose all their Hopes and Expectations, in sore Pressures: Here Believers have nothing to cheer them up but Faith and Hope; Faith believes an happy Issue, and Hope encourageth the Soul to wait patiently for it. But if Hope deferred maketh the Heart sick, what will Hope frustrate do? Finally then, they will lose their own Soul, and this is so invaluable a Jewel, that its Worth is not known here, but it will be fully known in Hell; What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul; or what shall a Man give in exchange for his soul? *Matth. 16. 26.* Secondly, Consider the Advantage of Preparation; such as are prepared shall glorify God, do good to others in the World, have a pleasant and comfortable Life here, and infinitely more pleasing Entrance into Eternal Happiness in the World to come: Of which more in the next Doctrine.

Observe 2d. That now in Christ Jesus there is free Access to God the Judge of all without any discouraging Dread or Terror (or you may take it thus) That Believers coming to be judged by God at the great Day, may be so far from being a Terror to them, that it is their Privilege, Encouragement and Comfort.

To prepare this for your Use, I shall, First, Prove the Truth of the Doctrine. Secondly, Shew why the Lord orders his second coming to Judgment, to be so encouraging to his own People.

First, That Believers coming to be judged at the great Day, may be so far from being a Terror to them, that it is their Encouragement and Comfort, may appear, if we consider, 1. Some Antecedents of the Judgment, more Remote, or more Immediate. The

Antecedents of this Judgment, which are more remote, or at greater Distance, which may yield Believers great Encouragement, are the Downfall of *Anti-christ's* Kingdom, promised *Revel. Chap. 18.* The Enlargement of the Church by the calling in *the General Assembly of the First-born*; the Conversion of the *Jews*, promised *Hosea 3. 5. Rom. 11. 26. 2 Cor. 3. 16.* and the Fullness of the *Gentiles*, *Rom. 11. 24, 25. Mal. 4. 11. Revel. 11. 15.* and a remarkable Work of Reformation and eminent Holiness among all Church-members, *Zech. 14. 20, 21.* How Joyful shall these Days be, when God's Name shall be One over all the Earth, when Religion shall appear in its true Lustre, and the Church Militant shall bear a greater Resemblance to the Church Triumphant? 2. There are other Antecedents of this Judgment, that more immediately precede the same, which will also be Encouraging to all Believers; as, 1. The Resurrection of the Body, *The Dead in Christ shall rise first*, when Christ descends from Heaven, the Souls of the Righteous shall descend with him, and shall find out their Bodies which have been sleeping in their Graves; with what Joy will they return, when the Building shall be Repaired? When, what is *sovereign in corruption is raised in Incorruption, it is so in dishonour, it is raised in Glory: it is so in weakness, it is raised in Power: this mortal shall have put on Immortality*, *1 Cor. 15. 42, 43, 54.* The parting of the Soul and the Body was never so sad as their Meeting then shall be Sweet, when the Soul shall find the Body Light, Nimble, Immortal, Incorruptible, Beautiful, and in a word, like Christ's glorious Body, *Phil. 3. 21.* fitted to partake of eternal Glory with him. 2. Then the Righteous shall meet Angels at their Graves Mouth, *Matth. 24. 31. He shall send the Angels with the great sound of a Trumpet, and they shall gather the Elect from the four Winds, from one end of Heaven to the other.* These holy excellent Creatures have a dear Love to the Saints, and have done many excellent Offices for them while in the Body, tho' they did not perceive it as too low and unfit for their Acquaintance, but now they shall be able to discern the Beauty of these lovely Spirits, their everlasting Companions in Glory; they shall join with them in Love and Praises of *Jehovah.* We may suppose the Angels saluting the Saints at that Day, thus, *Arise ye that are highly favoured of God, come forth ye that are greatly beloved, welcome, welcome ye happy Ones that are blessed among the Children of Men: your Lord is come and stays for you, he has sent us to call and convey you into his Presence, that you may see and share of his Glory.* 3. The Righteous shall then meet one another, *2 Thess. 2. 1. We beseech you, Brethren, by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.* If we be found in that Number, then we shall meet with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, and all the holy Kings, Prophets and Apostles, Martyrs and holy Men who have lived in all Generations; they shall arise like so many shining Suns out of the Earth, O! how shall we be delighted with the Sight of such a glorious Train and Company, when we see the Image and Picture of our Lord upon them, drawn so to the Life? What sweet mutual Congratulations of our old Acquaintance in the Flesh shall we have, who with us were acquainted with the Lord? 4. The Righteous shall be brought up together in the Air, *1 Thess. 4. 16, 17.* In the Morning of the Resurrection, the Spirit of Life from God will enter into the Bodies of the Saints, they shall stand up and possibly may hear a Voice from Christ in the Air, saying, *Come up hither:* And then they shall be caught up, and ascend in the Air to meet the Lord: O what inexpressible Pleasure and Delight will they find when they feel themselves to move upwards, when they are leaving the Earth and wicked Men, and so many glorious Persons of them together ascending to meet the Lord. 5. They shall see and meet the Lord, *1 Thess. 4. 17. The Comfort of this will be beyond all the former; the Sound of the last Trumpet will be*

be sweet Musick in their Ears, then will they lift up their Heads with Joy. How transporting will the first Glance of their Eye be upon the Lord Jesus Christ? when they see him yet afar off clothed with such Brightness and Beauty; never did their Eye behold such an Object before; they admired to see the Saints, and to see themselves so transformed, but how will they admire to see the Lord in such Glory, as will darken and out-shine Sun, Moon and Stars? If the Disciples did gaze after him with Wonder when he was taken from them, and ascended into Heaven, with what Wonder will his Disciples at the great Day (most of whom never saw him in the Flesh, none of them saw him in such Glory) admire and wonder when they see him coming in the clouds of Heaven? when they see and know him to be their very Lord and Master, their Sovereign and Saviour, their Righteousness and Strength, their Head and Husband, their All and in All, who was Born, Lived, Died, Rose again, Interceded in Heaven for them, and now is come in Glory to make them forever Partakers of his Glory. Christ will then admire the Saints as his Children, his Friends, his Jewels, the Members of his Body, as his beautiful Bride and Spouse, as his Servants who have done their Work and kept his Honour in the World. And they will admire him, if they did Love, tho' they never saw him but by the Eye of Faith, 1 Peter. 1. 8. How will they Love him when they get so full and so satisfying a View of him, and see a thousand-fold more in him than ever was told them? Now, from these Antecedents of the Judgment of the great Day, it may be evident, *That Believers coming to the Judge, need not be a Terror, but may be for their Encouragement and Comfort.*

The same may be further evident from the Judgment it self; for 1. The Lord will at that Day take Account of Saints, and openly commend them before the General Assembly of Men and Angels, Rom. 14. 10, 12. *We shall all stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ, every one of us shall give account of himself to God.* Tho' the Righteous be not brought to Condemnation, yet they shall be brought to Judgment. The Lord will take Notice of their Graces, what Faith, what Self-denial, what godly Sorrow, and spiritual Joy they exercised in a lower World, and commend the same; he will take Account of the Improvement of their Talents, their Gifts and Graces, *Matth. 25. 19.* who have been most diligent to do good to others, and to bring Glory to his Name; he will notice the Afflictions they endured for his sake, *Luke 22. 28, 29.* *Ye are they which have continued with me in my Temptations, and I appoint to you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;* and he will notice and commend their Works of Charity, and other good Deeds performed by his Grace, *Matth. 25. 35, 36.* The Saints will even be amazed at the wonderful Applause and Commendation God will give them. 2ly, Christ at that Day will come as the Saints glorious Bridegroom, to solemnize their Marriage with himself, *Psal. 45. 14, 15.* The Espousals are on Earth when Believers consent to subscribe the Contract, and accept Christ offered in the Gospel, *Song 3. 11. Psal. 45. 10, 11.* but the Solemnizing, Consummation and unspeakable Joy resulting from this Marriage, is reserved for this glorious Day, when Christ the Bridegroom shall come decked with his best Ornaments, clothed with a Garment of Salvation, and girded with the Rob of Righteousness: He will come with his best Attendants and meet his Bride midway, *Dan. 7. 10.* *Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the Judgment was set, and the Books were opened.* He will welcome her with gracious Invitations and Acclamations of Joy, *Matth. 25. 39.* He will solemnly declare his Consent to take her home to his own House, to be for ever with him, to be Sharer of the Glory he had before the World was, saying, *Ye are they which*

which have constituted with me in my Temptations, and I appoint unto you a Kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my Table in my Kingdom, and sit on Thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Israel; Luke 22:28, — 31. He will not entrust Angels, as Princes on Earth entrust Ambassadors, to bring home his Bride, but he will put such Honour on her as to come himself, and hand her home to Glory. 37. The very passing Sentence on the Saints will afford them Joy at that Day, all his Gospel-Invitations were sweet, but this is a crowning Cordial, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World, Matth. 25:34. Come enter into the Kingdom of Glory: For which the Father has chosen you, and called you, which I have purchased, and now fitted and made ready for you, come along with me, I will shew you my Glory, Where I am, there ye shall be also; ye shall live and reign with me for ever, enter into your Masters Joy, I will bring you to his House and Presence, where there is fullness of Joy and Pleasures for evermore. 41. Our Lord will receive his People to himself at that Day, John 14:23. This imports, that he will take them home Safely, Honourably, and to their own Satisfaction. He will receive them off the Father's Hand who delivered them to him, John 17:6. off the Hand of Angels, who gathered them together to meet the Lord in the Air, Mat. 24:31. And off their own Hand, they frequently and cheerfully surrendered themselves to him, John 4:4. and now he publicly testifies that he has accepted the Offer. He will complete the Work of Redemption, deliver them wholly from all their Enemies, kept them Captive, as from Sin that oft kept them from enjoying his Presence, but shall do so no more; from Satan who oft troubled them in the World, but shall assault them no more; from their evil Hearts which created Jealousies betwixt Christ and them, but now all Tears shall be wiped from their Eyes; their Bodies shall no more be kept in the Grave at Distance from their Lord, but Soul and Body shall be made like his, and fitted for enjoying him, and performing honourable Service to him throughout all Eternity. Formerly they served evil Masters, now they shall serve himself only. Our Lord proposes a Felicity to himself in having all the Members of his mystical Body brought to Glory; they are his Purchase, and his lawful Conquest, they will be Monuments of his Glory, and continually sing his Praise; and well may we (if so happy as to be found at his right Hand on that Day) propose Joy, Comfort and Satisfaction in it.

Finally, This will be the gladdest Day that ever was, or can be supposed among that blessed Company. God the Father will rejoice when Christ presents the Saints to him, he rejoices in them now, Zeph. 3:17. how much more when they will be presented without Spot or blemish? Christ will rejoice, it will be the Day of the gladness of his Heart, for then and not till then he receives his Mystical Fulness, then he sees the Travel of his Soul, and is compleatly satisfied, Isa. 53:11. The Holy Spirit will rejoice, all his sanctifying Designs in the World will that Day be compleatly crowned. It will be a rejoicing Day to Angels, they rejoiced at Christ's Incarnation for us, they wonder at our Redemption, they were glad at our Conversion, and cannot but now triumph with Joy to see all the Saints brought home to their Father's House. And it will be a Day of rejoicing to the Saints themselves, for whatever Sights of God, Christ, Heaven and Glory they got in the World, this Sight will infinitely surpass all, and be to a Wonder surprising! This is a Day of relieving all their Wants, and supplying all their Necessaries, of disappointing all their Doubts and Fears, and of doing above and beyond what they could hope, ask or crave. Many of them feared they should never see his Face in Mercy; now when they see his Face in Righteousness, and themselves blessed in the full

Enjoyment

Enjoyment of him, how shall they be satisfied with his Likeness? and rejoice with exceeding Joy.

Secondly, I proposed to shew why the Lord orders his second coming to Judgment to be so encouraging to his People; and 1. *It is their Fathers good Pleasure thus to give them the Kingdom*, Luke 12. 32. 2ly, Saints were despised by the World, therefore he will Honour them, before these who slighted and undervalued them; who, tho' they would give a thousand Worlds (if at their Disposal) for the Glory they see the Saints adorned with at that Day, yet cannot attain to it. Nay, they must stand with the utmost Confusion and Honor, and receive that awful Sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*. 3ly, This Procedure will convince the Consciences of all Flesh, *That verily there is a Reward for the Righteous, there is a God that judgeth in the Earth*, Psal. 68. 11. Rewards and Punishments oft in this side of Time were not equally distributed; but this great Judgment will make all odds even, *God will render to every Man according to the things done in the Body, whether it be good or bad*, 2 Cor. 5. 10. 4ly, Our Lord Jesus in this Matter as the Head of his Church, and evidences his matchless Love for his People; he protects and defends them in the World, and in the End will bring them to Glory, and perfect what concerns them. 5ly, It is for our Lord a greater Glory, it will then appear that the Father has fully performed all the Promises in the Covenant of Redemption, and *has given him the Heathen for an Inheritance, when all Kindreds, Tongues and Languages, shall sing Praises to him that sits upon the Throne, and lives for ever and ever*. Our Lord will not be ashamed of his Saints, but will own them as his Bride and Spouse, before God, Angels, and the whole World, will welcome them home to Glory, and enter them to the Possession of it, to their unspeakable Comfort and Joy, and his own eternal Glory.

Use 1. Of Trial, Examine and try if you be of their Number to whom this Judgment of the great Day shall be so comfortable and encouraging; Try by these Evidences, if you may apply this Comfort to your selves; 1. Have ye already come to God by Conversion? Have ye past the Pangs of the New Birth? Known some of the Terrors of Mount Sinai in Conviction and Humiliation, and are made *new Creatures*, your Minds enlightened in the Knowledge of Christ, and your Wills subject to his Will? Can ye say, *Whereas once I was blind, now I see*? If so, ye have the *First-fruits of the Spirit*, and may cheerfully wait for the *Adoption, the Redemption of the Body*, Rom. 8. 23. Since ye are *born again*, ye shall see the Kingdom of God, John 3. 3. 2ly, Know ye now what it is to keep up Communion and Fellowship with God the Judge of all? Except it be begun here, ye shall never taste it hereafter: This consists in a sweet divine Correspondence betwixt Christ and the Soul, rich Emanations and Influences of Grace being set out on the Spirit, helping it to suitable Returns, Psal. 138. 3. This Communion being imported in the Text as formerly explained, I may tell you more particularly, that, 1. It is mutual betwixt the Lord and his People, they make use of his Names, Titles and Attributes, by acting Faith on them for Supply to their Necessities; and he makes Use of them as he pleases, sending Crosses as Tokens of Familiarity: He loves them with free and unchangeable Love, and they take Delight in him, and in all Ordinances and Duties wherein they may meet with him: He tells them such Secrets, as the rest of the World knows not, Psal. 25. 19. and they pour forth their Hearts before him, and tell him all their Distresses: He is concerned for their Good, and they for his Glory; he visits their Souls by the Influence of his Grace, and they visit his Throne with their Prayers and Praises, they are overjoyed when they enjoy the Light of his Countenance; and

and he is pleased with their Duties performed in Sincerity through the Assistance of his Grace, *Song 2. 14.* 2ly, In order to keep up this Communion, our Lord gives a believing View to his Saints of his glorious Perfections, as the Subject of their Meditation, and rivets home the divine Impressions of them; thus his Goodness and Mercy melts the Heart, and makes it full of humble Blushing and thankful Admiration and Amazement, and holy Solicitude to do these things that please him. His Anger and Displeasure, when a black Cloud of Frowns and Threats appear in his Face, makes them to repent for Sin, and take no Peace nor Quiet till he restore his Favour, *Psal. 51. 8, 12.* His Omniscience obliges them to Sincerity of Heart before him, and gives them Comfort under Doubts and Fears of their Integrity, and when under Reproaches from the World, *Jer. 12. 3.* His Purity and immense Holiness fills with Shame and deep Amazement, for its Pollution and Filthiness, *1st Jn. 6. 3, 4, 5.* *Job 40. 4, 5.* and his Veracity and Faithfulness engaged in Promise to his People fills them with holy Confidence, Courage and Fortitude, *Heb. 11. 5, 6.* The Lord also keeps up Communion with them by the gracious Operation of his Spirit, sometimes convincing them of Sin, or sanctifying their Natures, or quickning Grace to lively Exercise, Faith to feed on himself, Love to delight in him, and Hope to expect Good from him. Or assisting them in Duty, or recovering them from a bad Case, or giving them Comfort suitable to their Distress. On the other Hand, Believers also keep up Communion with God the Judge of all, by their longing Desires to find his comfortable Presence, *Job 23. 1.* by frequent pouring forth their Hearts at the Throne of his Grace in Prayer, and acting Faith on his Merits and promised Grace for Help, by keeping up a holy Frame of Spirit in the Intervals of Duty, by frequent ejaculatory Desires, by admiring his matchless Grace discovered in the Gospel, by making Use of publick Ordinances, so as to profit by them; and by frequent renewing personal covenant Engagements to be the Lord's. If you know what this coming to God, this Access and Communion with him in Ordinances and Duties on Earth is; then may ye hope, that when he comes to judge the quick and dead at the last Day, it shall be for your great Encouragement and Comfort, these who see or enjoy him now darkly as through a Glass, shall hereafter see him Face to Face, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* Third Evidence, The Lord the Judge of all, will come to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe, *2 Thim. 1. 10.* Try then if you be Believers, have ye abandoned all your Idols? Have ye given your selves wholly to the Lord without Reservation, to be his, and for his Service? Have ye embraced Jesus Christ as offered in the Gospel for Righteousness and Strength, for obtaining Pardon of Sin through the Merits of his Death, and Sanctification of your Natures through the Power of his Grace? And does this Faith encline you to purifie your Hearts, and perfect Holiness in the fear of God? If so, this Doctrine may afford you sweet Comfort. 4ly, Our Lord will come to the Comfort of these who love and desire his Appearance, *Heb. 9. 28.* —Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without Sin, unto Salvation, *2 Tim. 4. 8.* Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me at that Day; and not to me only, but also to all them that love his Appearance. Believers look for Christ's Appearance with an Eye of Faith, they expect it as sure as Death, yea as more sure, because the Death of some will be prevented by it; they look for it with an Eye of Hope, *Titim 2. 13.* As they have hopes of the Glory of Heaven, so they have hopes of the coming of Christ, who will receive them into Glory, and bring them with Triumph into the new Jerusalem. They look for it also with an Eye of Love and Desire, they have many a longing, With that he

would come down and receive them to himself, *Rev. 22. 20. Even so come, Lord Jesus, Song 8. 14. Make haste, my beloved, and be as a Roe upon the Mountains of Sion.* It may be some may say, We are afraid of Christ's Appearance; but it is like as a Wife desires the coming of her Husband, yet fears lest she be out of Order; so you only fear, lest at his coming you be unprepared: Unbelievers would be content Christ would stay away for ever, and they live for ever on the Earth, but Believers for all the World would not that he should stay, for even in Heaven they love his Person and Presence, and desire his coming, but only fear their Want of Preparation.

Life 2. Of Comfort and Encouragement. How great Comfort may the Saints of God who can apply these Evidences, reap from this Doctrine under all the Difficulties and Crosses they can be under in the World, this Reward will infinitely more than counter-balance all your Sufferings for the Cause of Christ, *Luke 22. 28. 2 Cor. 4. 17.* This Day when Christ the Judge of all shall appear, will be the time of Reformation of all things, *Acts 3. 21:* it is the Day when ye shall receive the Salvation of your Souls, *1 Pet. 1. 9:* the Day when ye shall enter into the purchased Possession, when ye shall receive a Crown that fadeth not away, when ye shall get Crowns on your Heads, and Palms in your Hands, when ye shall sit down on Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel, when Garrets and Sighing shall flee away, when ye shall be Ornaments of the higher House, and Monuments of the Mediator's Glory: May ye not, yea it is your Duty to look up, and lift up your Heads with Joy since this your Redemption draw nigh, *Luke 22. 28.*

This may also encourage you to the Duties of Religion, Saints under the Old Testament had not such a plain, a full Discovery of the Glory of Christ's second Appearance without Sin unto Salvation; since the Lord is pleased to discover so many Grounds of Comfort to you, how should ye admire his Love, and magnify his matchless Grace that he should so honour his People, when not in an humbled but in a glorious exalted State, his Love is still the same, that he should manifest his Love to them before the whole World, to make their greater Enemies envy them, and that notwithstanding we were so blind, wretched and miserable by Nature, and so many times provoked and grieved his Spirit while in the World. How should the Consideration of these things make you watch against every Sin that may offend so good a God? Be Zealous to advance his Glory, and to work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

The last glorious Privilege under the Gospel State this Text reminds us of, is, *That they are come to the Spirit of God, Men made Perfect.* If it be asked, How can we come to this now while in the Militant Church below? *Answer, 1.* We are come to a clearer Apprehension, Sight and Knowledge of their blessed Estate after Death, than they could have who were under the Law, *Eph. 3. 3. 7.* 2. We are come to them in our Representative the blessed Jesus, who has carried our Nature into the very midst of them, whom they all behold with the highest Admiration and Delight: In Christ they and we make up, but *John 6. 29. 30. Chap. 3. 15. Of him sit with Family in Heaven and Earth named.* 3. We are come, *That is,* we are as good as come, there is nothing betwixt them and us but a Pull of Breath; we are on the very Borders of the Country, and there is nothing to speak of betwixt us and them. He would have us to reckon these things as present, which so shortly will be present to us; with the high and most comfortable Life of Faith, we may live on Heavenly Things while in this Earth. These who make up this part of the great Assembly, are described by a three-fold Character; 1. They are *Spirits of Men*; Spirits, *That is,* Rational, immaterial, thinking Substances, strictly opposed to Bodies, being so way the Objects of our external Sense, neither

neither Visible to the Eye, nor Sensible to the Touch. 2. They are *Spirits of just Men*, Believers be just even while in this World, being absolved from the Guilt of Sin in their Justification, Rom. 8. 1: Tho' groaning under Imperfections, yet they are justified from all these things from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses, Acts 13. 39. Much more are they just, when they attain an absolute Freedom from the Pollution and Indwelling of Sin, which Saints teach in their glorified Condition. 3. They are *Spirits of just Men made Perfect*, or Consummate; not absolutely wanting the Body, but Perfected, for so much as concerns their Spirit; being admitted to the full Enjoyment of God, which is the highest Pitch of Happiness the Soul can aspire at. There is no Foundation for the *Purghary* here, that State is plainly cast out of the Communion of the Catholick Church by the Apostle, when other Privileges are named, there is not a word of it. But by these *Spirits made Perfect*, are plainly understood, the *Souls of Men*, that essential Part of our Nature subsisting in a State of Separation from the Body. With these Souls of the eminent Prophets and Apostles, the Church Militant has Communion, not as Objects of Worship, nor as Mediators of Intercession, such Suppositions or Practices are Injurious to them, and Blasphemous toward Christ; but they live in the same Love of God, which animates the Church below, they ascribe the same Praises to God and the Lamb, tho' in a more perfect Manner, and are concerned for the Church Militant, as being Members of the same mystical Body of Christ. From the words thus explained,

Observe, That the Souls of the serious Godly parted from their Bodies by Death, are immediately thereupon made Perfect in the full Fruition of God in the higher House, infinitely freed from all Sin and Sorrow, and associate with that Heavenly Company in the Kingdom of God in Glory.

Thus the Lord said to the penitent Thief, Luke 23. 43. To Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. And David says, Thou wilt show me the Path of Life, in thy Presence is Fulness of Joy, in thy right Hand are Pleasures for evermore, Psal. 16. 11. As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteousness, thy shall be satisfied when I awake with thy Likeness, Psal. 17. verse last.

To prepare this Doctrine for our Use, I shall, First, Prove the Truth of it. Secondly, Premise some Considerations further to Illustrate it. Thirdly, Inquire into the Nature of that blessed State of Perfection they are arrived at.

First, As the Truth of this Doctrine is evident from Texts already alleged, so it may be further Demonstrate and Confirmed, 1. From many other Scriptures, as Luke 16. 26. The Beggar died and was carried by Angels into Abraham's Bosom: That is, to Heaven, a State of Perfection. The Apostle says, I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, which is far better, Phil. 1. 23. And we know, that if this outwardly Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a House in the Heavens eternal not made with Hands, 2 Cor. 5. 1. And blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, ye said the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them, Revel. 14. 13. The like Comforts against the Fears of Death, from the Souls immediately entering into Glory, after the Dissolution of the Body, are afforded to Saints in the Old Testament, Gen. 38. 19. Thou shalt go with thy Father in Peace, thou shalt be buried in a good old Age. Compared with Isa. 57. 2. He shall enter into Peace, they shall rest in their Beds, each one walking in his Rightness, Psal. 73. 24. Psal. 36. 9. Dan. 12. 13. 2. Saints have this Happiness promised to them, If in your Father's good Will to give you the Kingdom, Luke 12. 32. Eternal Life is promised to them by God who cannot lie before the World began, Titus 1. 2. Our Lord Christ has purchased it by the Price of his own Blood, Heaven is the purchased Possession, Ephes. 1. 14.

Hebrews XII. Verse 23.

355

He says that they may be brought to it; *John 14. 23. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.* He has taken Possession of it in their Name; *John 17. 24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.* They have the First-fruits of this happy State in their Souls already; *Rom. 8. 23. They wait for the redemption of our bodies.* And shall quickly walk by Sight; this immediately Succeeds that, as the Imperfect is done away by the coming of the Perfect, as the Twilight is done away by the appearing of the perfect Day. There is a mystical Union betwixt Believers and Christ; He is the Head, they are the Members; He is the Husband, they are his Spouse; The Members must be where the Head is, and the Wife where the Husband. Christ will not want them till the Day of the general Resurrection; but their Souls shall be admitted to the Enjoyment of him so soon as they part from their Bodies. 2. There is nothing in Reason contrary to this Doctrine, the Soul in its Un-bodied State can enjoy Blessedness, and perform its Acts of Intellection and Volition, the Understanding is never more Bright, Clear and Apprehensive, than when the Body in an Extasy, is laid aside as to any Assistance of the Mind; the Soul at that time uses not the Bodies Assistance, as the very words *Extasy* and *Rapture* convince us. To understand by *Spirits*, *Phantasms* or *Images*, does not agree to the Soul Naturally and Necessarily, but by Accident, as it is now in Union with the Body. Were it but once loosed from the Body, it would understand better without them, than ever it did in the Body by them. The Souls of rest Saints shall after Death be much like the Souls of Angels fit for immediate Converse with God.

Secondly, I am to Propose some Considerations further to Illustrate this Doctrine; As 1. There is a two-fold Parting of the Soul from the Body, one *Mental*, and another *Real*. The *Intellectual or Mental*, is when the Soul is out on the Thoughts of Eternity, in the Exercise of Faith and Love after God, Christ and Things above, *Psalm 63. 8. Coloss. 3. 2.* The *Physical or Real Separation*, is by the Shock of Death, the more frequent Use we make of the former, the less Horror will attend the latter, these serious Thoughts of a Parting-hour will prevent much Guilt, will make Sin terrible, and cause the Soul fear it above all things. Hereby we may come to more inward Knowledge of the Nature of Death; and the more we are acquainted with it, the less it would terrify us. A Lion is more terrible to him that never saw him, than to his Keeper that sees him every Day, and feeds him. Approaching Death and the Grave should be the Subject of our Daily Meditation. Holy Job speaks of them, *Men of their nearest Relations, I have said to Corruption, Thou art my Father in the Worm, Thou art my Mother and Sister.* *Job 17. 14.* 2. Consider this *Real Separation*, either in the previous Pangs and Agonies of it; Or in the Parting-stroke that lays the Body prostrate at the Feet of victorious conquering Death. The former to the People of God are the worst and bitterest part of Death; Except these Conflicts with Satan they have to grapple with in Death-bed. The Soul will not easily part the Body, but disputes every Passage from Member to Member, till at last it is forced to surrender. Sometimes they want these Pangs, as *Belshazzar* and the Martyr *Bayham*, who amidst the Flames professed, *I was so him as I was of Jesus.* Yet there is still in Death a dissolving of the Tie of the Union betwixt Soul and Body, which is called, *A putting off this Tabernacle.* *2 Peter 1. 13. 24.* dissolving of the earthly Tabernacle, *2 Cor. 5. 1.* It is our last Farewell to the World, never to return, *Our Place shall know us no more.* 3. The Souls of Believers at the very Moment of parting with their Bodies, will be by Angels received and translated into the Higher house, when *Lazarus* died his Soul was carried by Angels into *Abraham's Bosom*,

Luke 16. 22. They are like tender Nurses, that keep us while we live, and being as home in their Arms to our Father's Bosom when we die; it is no small Honour to have such a noble Convey to guard and attend our Souls to Heaven. The Lord might by his immediate Power gather home, to himself his Peoples Souls at Death; but for their greater Glory he sends Angels to attend them, and this their Assension is in some measure like Christ's, who was attended by thousands of Angels, *Psal. 68. 17.* These blessed Spirits gather together the Elect from the four Winds of Heaven at the last Day, *Matth. 24. 31.* and so are most fit to convey their Souls singly to Heaven at their Death. The Soul is nothing prejudged nor maimed by its parting with the Body, it is no less active in all Operations, Powers, and Vital Actions of Will and Understanding; yea more than before; being freed from Clogs and Weights of the Body, it acts freely according to its own Nature. Souls being parted from their Bodies, ascend with all the Habits of Grace in them, and all the comfortable Improvements of their Graces accompanying and following them. Common Gifts fall at Death, but saving Grace sticks fast to the Soul, and ascends with it unto Glory, *Revel. 14. 13.* Their Works follow them, they can be useful no further in the World, except that their Words and Examples may be had in Remembrance; but are transported for the Service of God in the Higher-house. It may be said of every true Christian, as of David, *Having stored his Generation according to the Will of God, he fell asleep.* *Acts 13. 36.* 6. Separated Souls are not housed in Purgatory for their more perfect Purification, as Papists speak, (the contrary is evident from Scripture, *Luke 23. 43.* *Luke 16. 22, 23.* That Fire of Purgatory is but a politick Contrivance to warm the Pope's Kitchen. Neither do these Souls wander in this World, nor fall asleep in a stupid benumbed State, as some old Heresicks taught; but the Souls of the Righteous do immediately pass into Glory, and are fixed as Pillars in the House of their God, and shall go no more forth, as is already proven. Heaven is prepared for them, *Psal. 16. 19, 20.* *Chap. 6. 20.* *John 14. 2.* and they are prepared for it, *Coloss. 1. 12.* Their Justification was complete before Death, and now their Sanctification is so too: Sin which came in at the Union, goes out at the Separation of their Souls and Bodies; they are Spirits of just Men made Perfect. 7. The Pleasures, Satisfaction and Delights of the separate Spirits of the just, are incomparably Greater and Sweeter than these they did at any time or could experience in their Bodily State; all they enjoyed here was but a Sip or Prefabration, compared with these full Draughts they have in an Unbodied State, *Psal. 16. 19.* *In thy Presence is Fulness of Joy, at thy Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.* This leads me

In the third Place, To enquire into that blessed State of Perfection they are strived at; Mortals that dwell in Houses of Clay, cannot lisp at these Glories above enjoyed by the Spirits of just Men made Perfect; yet something thereof the sacred Scripture declares, from which I shall clear it a little, by considering these two, First, The manifold Evils they are now rid of. Secondly, The noble and excellent Things they are admitted to enjoy. As to the First, They are freed from all manner of Evil; 1. From the Necessities of Nature, Food, Clothes, Sleep, no need of these things there. What Food to a glorified Soul? whose Meat and Drink is to do the Will of our heavenly Father: What Clothing? to one clothed with the Righteousness of Christ. What Sleep? since there is no Night here. 2. They are set free from all the Imperfections of Nature; How many abstruse Myseries we are noways Masters of? Our Reason has suffered a fearful Befuddle by the Fall, what is the Reason of all the occult Qualities, the Sympathies and Antipathies. And our Spiritual as well as our Natural Knowledge is dim;

we have been in it, yet but through a Glass darkly, but there all that Darkness shall be resolved into clearest and most perfect Light. 34. From all toilsome Labours of this Life: God has enacted, Gen. 3. 19. In the Sweat of thy Brow shalt thou eat thy Bread: But there they shall enjoy all that Glory they have laboured for, They shall rest from their Labour. Rev. 14. 13. Their Work there is full of Ease, perpetual love and Praise; O delightful Labour! 35. From all Sorrows, Rev. 21. 4. And God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more Pain: While here you may as well separate Weight from Lead, as Trouble from Man's Life, John 16. 22. 2 Tim. 2. 12. But one Sight of Christ's sweet charming and smiling Face will turn all their Waters of Mourning to Rivers of Pleasures, all their Mourning to Mistle. 36. From all Temptations here, the Devil is still lying at the Catch, which is very disquieting, and makes the Lives of Believers Uncomfortable; the World and Flesh are full of Temptations also; here Temptations lie in wait for us in ever Station, Condition, Society and Place; but there the Believers have escaped them all; the Egyptians shall no more appear. 37. From all perplexing Doubts and Fears incident to the best while here; but there they shall have no Place, but shall lie in the Arms and Embraces of eternal sensible Love and Joy. 38. From the Society of the Wicked, here they are forced to be in their Company; and this makes them many a sore Heart, Psal. 120. 4. What is me, that I sojourn in Mesopotamia? I dwell in the Arams of Kedar; 5. Quicken the World to come, The Son of Adam shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather me of his Kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and they shall cast them into a Furnace of Fire. And, 8. They shall be delivered from all manner of Sin, both in its Acts and Habits, the Cure was begun in Sanctification, but is not perfected till Glorification. They complain of no Evil in the World with greater Grief than of this, Rom. Chap. 7. Psal. 38. but ye shall be perfectly freed from this when ye come to the Spirit of just Men made perfect. 39. Secondly, These Saints shall have a glorious Fruition of all Good; as 1. Immediate Communion with God himself in this Solopolis. Call the Blessed Vision. If some few Minutes of Enjoyment of him here, and Saints come in sweet, as Psal. 73. 25. what will everlasting Enjoyment be? Their Way of converse with God is changed from what it was in the Body, here the internal Medium was Faith, 2 Cor. 5. 7. without this there can be no Communion betwixt God and the Soul in this World; Heb. 11. 6. The external Means are Ordinances and Duties, Psal. 63. 2. but in that Moment they are Unbodied, they are out of both these Ways of enjoying God, yet the Soul is thereby a great Gainer; for its present Communion with God excels all the former: Their Visions of God are more clear, distinct and direct, now they see Face to Face; they are more sweet and satisfying, producing perfect Pleasures; more constant, fixed and steady; the Wildness and Roaring of the Fancy shall be then perfectly cured: More influential, operative and transforming, We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, John 17. 24. More permanent, yea and perpetually here they have not ay his Presence and Manifestations of his Love; The Clouds remove after the Rain, they are oft in the Dark, and oh how then dejected: 1 Jsa. 29. 14. Psal. 73. 8, 9. but in Glory nothing shall interrupt betwixt his Love and them, they shall behold the Face of God in Glory, and be ever with him. Now this immediate Communion with, and Fruition of God is the very Substance, Marrow and Essence of the Happiness of Heaven, because it is so universal and comprehensive a Good; that all good is contained in it; which is evident if we consider, 2. That God thus enjoyed in Christ is an universal Good, it is impossible there

these Bodies be only the first Perfection but what is in him be far more than our
 Food, which is more than but Clothing, he knows our Health than Physick. A Smile
 of his Face is more Joy and Consolation to us than all the Enjoyments and Satisfaction
 in the World can be. Now God that is all these things to us in the Use of them, he is
 a thousand times more all in himself. 1. *God thus enjoyed is a pure unmixed
 Good, for good, that there is nothing that would be hurtful in him; all earthly good
 things are defective and imperfect, those are mixtures of Sweetness in them, but some-
 thing bitter and hurtful to life. Drop of Honey there is so much Gall in it, no Rose
 without its Prickles, no Condition without its Troubles; but God is Light, and in him
 there is no Darkness at all.* 2. *God thus enjoyed is a durable Good, exactly adapted to
 all the Desires and Longings of a gracious Soul, which is of so pure and refined a Confi-
 tution, as it cannot find satisfaction in any created thing, but when come
 to the Enjoyment of God himself, he is satisfied and happy. 3. *God thus enjoyed is an
 all-sufficient Good, he is Self-sufficient for himself, and will suffice to his People,
 1. *Key of 7. 2. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.***

The Lord is God, that the State of Hell is as terrible as the State of Heaven immediately
 will be to them that are in it. Then we may say, *There must be a pairing between Soul and Body, let us live within sight of
 our sitting Day.* A great Part of our Work is to provide and prepare for this.
 Therefore I shall enforce this Duty with some Motives, and then give some Directions
 for its right Performance. As to the First, Be exhorted to live much within sight of a
 parting Hour, when *Death shall come to us, and the Spirit to God shall go.* For
 this would prevent much Sin, that I shall do, and may die to Morrow, what
 Riches will be occasion. This will be the best expedient, also, to make Life com-
 fortable, and Death easy and passable. Grace and Peace secured will be a noble
 Guard-*stone.* Consider, that the State of Man under Death admits of no Amend-
 ments and Alterations; Life is a time of working, in Death we receive the Reward of
 our Work; what we do for obtaining Heaven, or avoiding Hell, must be done now.
 For there is no Work nor Device in the Grave, whether we are going. Death is a
 fixed and determined State, in that disordered Gallies of Sin shall never have a forgiven
 time, the Blood of Christ will then be of no avail, you it will stand against thee.
 O think then on Preparation for Death in time, wait for it, *For the Day of
 my appointed Time will I die, and will my Change come.* Consider what Death is, and what
 it doeth. Death is a Deprivation, it takes us of all Comfort in the World, Friends,
 Relations, Lands, Houses, Honours, and the like Enjoyments. Note, that we remain in
 the Earth, but labour to come. It is a Dislocation, the dear and dear Union between the
 Soul and the Body, Death violently rents asunder, and is a Dislocation. *For so
 the living Man is Deprived, that Body that was formerly and wonderfully made in
 Secret, and curiously wrought in the lower Parts of the Earth, Death will demolish and
 put it down to the Ground, turning it to Corruption and Dust.* Death occasions
 when it comes, our spiritual Rootes to shake, to more strongly, then the guilt of Sin
 will fix in the Face of the Criminal, when he appears before his Judge. O how do great
 Sins fear and terrify the Soul. The Devil will then be very fierce and furious, his
 Time is short, and therefore his Rage will be great. And Death awakens the Conscience,
 that we lulled asleep before, but now it thunders out the Threatnings of the Law and
 Vengeance of the Gospel. When Man comes to die he will have to do with God
 himself immediately, now no Vail between God and the Soul, but naked Man
 presents himself to judge the Soul, even as it is. Consider the misery of such
 as die unprepared, who lose all their inward Comforts, *For so the
 Opposites of Grace, all his hopes and consolations, Job 19. 28. When I shall have
 the Hyperion, though he shall give, when God shall say, and he shall, his own
 Soul, the Vail whereof he will know, in Hell when he endures unspeakable and
 inconceivable Torments.* Secondly I shall give some Directions in Order to prepare for this
 parting Hour; and a Beware of some things which many People careless and unconcerned
 in this Matter, as, Beware of inordinance, live in the World and things thereof, these
 take up all the Thoughts and Time of Men; so that other things get no Room, they
 are so pleased with a kind of Defect of long life, as to delight their sensual Appetites in
 earthly Things, in Pleasures, Profits and Honours of the World, as if all their Happiness
 were wrapt up in these. Beware of putting off the Thoughts of Death by Delays as
 many do, looking on it only as a thing at a Distance and far off, say to young People,
 You must die: True, say they, but tell old People that for us there is no such haste yet:
 Old People, your Infirmities and Weakness portend your Dissolution hasties; True, yet

we may weather out a few Years more, so each puts the evil Day far off: Hopes of a long Life is the Cause of an ill Life. Some cannot think of Death, because such Apprehensions bring a great deal of Fear and Terror with them; Nature abhors Separating in a loathsome Grave. 1. Conscience of Guilt cannot think of a Tribunal to everlasting Concerns? 2. Die to Sin by daily Endeavours to mortify and subdue it in its Power and Strength, by Exercise of an holy Life. *Rom. 8. 13. If we through the Spirit mortify the Deeds of the Body, they shall we live.* 3. Keep Conscience clear, that it may not have the Guilt of any known Sin to charge you with; a Pure is usually a Peaceable Conscience. 4. Get Sin pardoned, and labour for the Intimation thereof; this will take the Sting out of Death. *I will forgive your Iniquities, I will remember your Sins no more.* 5. Get Hearts and Affections crucified to the World and Things below, learn to use the World as if we used it not, minding that we are but Strangers and Pilgrims here: send your best Things to Heaven before-hand, namely your Heart and Affections. *Phil. 3. 20.* 6. Labour to live every Day as your last, doing nothing but what ye would be willing to be found doing at Death and Judgment: Say to thy self, If I knew this to be my last Day, would I be thus employed as I am? 7. Endeavour Glory and Happiness of Heaven; who are assured of an eternal Life in Heaven, need not fear a Temporal Death on Earth.

Inference 2. Is it so, That separated Souls of Believers are in such a State of Perfection and Happiness? Hence see that God has not hid the House of Jacob seek him in vain; He Inhabits them in a Throne and Kingdom: Lay Repentance, Mortification, Watching and Prayer in Balance with this. Our Captain gives double Pay to his Souldiers, Joy and Peace in his Service here, and a noble Reward hereafter. An eternal weight of Glory, such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor enters into the Heart of Man to conceive. Our Service cannot be so hard as our Reward is Sweet.

Inference 3. Then, Religion is no such disgraceful, ignominious Thing as the Devil and the World would represent it to be. *Acts 28. 22.* As for this Set we know that every where it is spoken against. But wise Men measure Things by the End of an holy Life, an eternal Crown. O Believers, despise your Consurns, and bind your Reprouchers as a Garland about your Head, for behold a glorious Kingdom is at Hand for you!

Inference 4. Here come and discern between them that fear God, and those that fear him not; at Death the one goes to a Palace, the other to a Prison whereof the Devil is the Jailor, and they by him bound in Chains of Darkness. O what Horror when Ingulphed in this Misery, and their Condition Hopeless, Helpless and Endless! That Word for ever fills the Soul with Despair.

Inference 5. Let this make you fall in Love with holy and Spiritual Duties; each of these will bring you a Step nearer this Happiness: *Finis dat amabilitatem mediis*, the End makes the Means more Lovely. Whole Heart is set on Riches, Trading is pleasant to him; holy Duties encrease Grace, and as Grace encreases, Glory hastens.

Inference 6. Believers, ye have no Cause to envy the Prosperity of the Wicked, tho' they have more than their Heart can Wish, *Psal. 73. 7.* and sleep themselves in Pleasures, *Job 21. 12.* Yet O envy them not, for this is all they shall get, *Luke 16. 26.* In thy Life thou receivedst thy good things, all thy Heaven was here. *Luther* calls the *Turks* *Boys* God has cast to Dogs. God has laid up better things for his Children, the Wicked go through

through a *Right Way* to Election; and Believers through a *Soul Way* to Communion. What duty shall I when a *Crown Royal* is set by for you; and the *Wine of Life* also as *Chalice*? Ye shall feed on the *Manna of Angels*; ye shall lie in *Christ's Bosom*; that Bed of Speech, where there is such a pleasant Variety, that *seven Millions of Angels* it shall be as Sweet, Fresh and Desirable as fresh *Moments of Felicity*, your *Desires* infinitely Satisfie, nothing absent ye could wish to enjoy; and every thing present your heart can desire. How little cause to fear Death, seeing it shall bring you to the *Spirit of God* and *Life made Perfect*. What is there here should make you desirous of Long Day? See ye not your *God dishonoured*? How can you bear it? Is not this *World's Valley of Tears*; and do ye weep to leave it? How little cause to mourn to *Back* for our *godly Friends*? Shed Tears for them who have all Tears wiped from their Eyes; Swallowed of Grief for them who are swallowed up of Joy? They are not lost, but gone a little before, and we shall meet shortly in *Glory*.

Use 2. Of Reproof. To several Sorts; As, 1. Such as mind not, not look after this Happiness of the *Spirit of just Men made Perfect*, who serve God as if they served him not, so far are they from the Practice of Saints who *work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. who reach forth to these things which are before, Phil. 3. 13. As *Racens* who strain every Limb that they may gain the Victory. 2. Such who spend themselves more in digging and sweating for Profit, Pleasures, and Honours in the World, than for this perfect State, Phil. 3. 19. *Who mind earthly Things*. 3. Who delay and put off securing this Heavenly Happiness till it be too late, like the foolish Virgins who came when the Door was shut. 4. Who were once zealous in Religion, as touched with a Coal from God's Altar: But since their Devotion is cooled, and they left the Pursuit of the Crown, has cast off the thing that is good, *Hos. 8. 3.* left the House of Prayer and gone to Play-houses. If it be asked, Whence this is? *Answer*, It is from want of a *Super-natural Principle of Grace*, that Branch must die that has no Root to grow on; It is from Unbelief, this *Evil Heart* inclines them to depart from the living God, *Hebr. 3. 12.* It is from some secret Idol nourished in the Soul, perhaps a wanton sensual Lust: Or, it is from Timorousness, lest they lose Place, Profit, or Life; Let such consider, *Hebr. 10. 38.* *If any Man draw back, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him*. *Luke 9. 63.* *No Man having put his Hand to the Plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God*. 5. This may reprove the People of God, who do not more look to this glorious Happiness, that in prospect thereof they may be encouraged under all Difficulties they meet with in the World: It may be Objected, That this is Mercenary, to perform religious Duties for a Reward: *Answer*, This is not Mercenary, but very consistent with the Example of most eminent Saints in Scripture, *2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.* *Hebr. 11. 26.* True indeed, God's Service is better without a Reward, than Satan's with all the Reward it can pretend to; But since God has so sweetly joined our Privilege and Duty together, why should we separate them? The Lord's People mind this Reward of perfect Happiness in another manner than the Hypocrite; the latter love Heaven only for Peace, Rest and Freedom from Hell's torments, but the Saints having Proof of the Comforts of his Presence in this Life, long for uninterrupted Communion with him in Glory, for Freedom from Sin, and perfect Holiness. The Hypocrite hates the Way of Holiness that leads to the Kingdom, but the Saints love this Way, study to be holy as he is holy, and that they may be fit for everlasting Enjoyment of him. Tho' the World then should reproach you for your Diligence in Religious Duties: Tho' they should persecute and do you a thousand Mischief, comfort your selves

Hebrews XII. Verse 23.

selves in this, ye shall shortly be above their Reach, *Where all Tears shall be wiped from your Eyes, and ye shall sit with Christ, ye shall also reign with him, Rom. 8. 17.*
 Use 3. Of *Trial*, Where we shall land, if among the *Spirits of just Men made Perfect*?
 O how many miss and come short! Let us then fear, and search, Trembling in the
 Body is a sad Disease, but in the Soul a blooming Grace, *Heb. 11. 7. Doubtless we are*
 ed of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared as Art to the looking of his Face.
 Two things should put us with holy Fear to an impartial Scrutiny, 1. Many have come
 several Steps to this Happiness, and yet come short of it; many have the Righteousness of
 the Scribes and Pharisees, abounding with Knowledge, Justice and Temperance, yet lack of
 this perfect Happiness, *Isaiah 4. 20.* Many have had a large Flag of Profession, as the
 Pharisee, *Luke 18. 11, 12.* have frequently attended Ordinances, as Herod, who wept
 John gladly, *Mark 6. 20.* and yet perished: Many have had some Trouble for Sin, and
 ments, as Water from Scorn by Fire, it was transient, quickly over, like Sea-bubbles;
 and it never alienated the Heart from Sin: Yea and some have had some flaming good
 Desires, like *Isaiah*, *Let me all the Days of my Youth, and let my last End be like his;*
 but such Desires were but sluggish, they would have Heaven in a Morning-sleep, with-
 out Pains they would have Mercy, but not heart-reforming Grace. Whatever Appear-
 ance of Grace these have, yet they may be found among these who get Damnation;
 therefore examine and take Care, lest ye be found Deceivers of your own selves, and
 lose this matchless Happiness. 2. To excite to Fear and Trial, consider what a great
 Loss the Loss of this Happiness will be; all the Tears in Hell are not sufficient to lament
 it, God's sweet Presence, the ravishing Views and Smiles of his gracious Face, O what
 Aggravations attend the Loss of these! For then they shall know the Worth of what
 they lost, which here they see not, nor care for; they shall cry out in great Horror, *The*
everlasting Glory is departed. Their own Conscience will upbraid them, *this is the Worm*
that never dies, a Self-accusing tormenting Mind, to look on others who have gained
 this Happiness, *To see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the King-*
dom of God, and your selves thrust out, this shall occasion weeping and gnashing of teeth,
Luke 13. 28. This Loss will be accompanied with Punishment of Sense, *The wicked shall*
be turned into Hell, *Psal. 9. 17.* They shall be tormented in flame, *Luke 16. 26.* The Lord
rains on them snares, fire and brimstone, *Psal. 11. 6.* Their Body and all its Members shall
 be consumed with everlasting destruction, their Souls shall endure the immediate Wrath
 of the Almighty, *2 Thess. 1. 9.* All comforting Affections shall flee away, all torment-
 ing Passions, as Wrath, Malice, Envy, Rage and Despair, shall be raised to the highest
 Degree: In a Word, God will glorify his mighty Power and Justice in hightning their
 Torment the highest, Divine Majesty can effect. Now, that they had Salvation offered
 to them on such easy Terms, and yet have been so active in destroying themselves, will
 make their Hell hotter than others; their Loss shall be Eternal, Irreparable and Un-
 speakable.

This then may lead us to enquire what ye shall do to prevent this Loss, and to gain
 this noble Prize, to be admitted among the *Spirits of just Men made Perfect*? Answer,
 1. Beware of some things may make you miss this Glory, beware of deep Security and
 Sloathfulness, *The Suggard desireth and hath nothing, because his Hands refuse to labour.*
 Beware of an imaginary Way to Heaven, thinking it is easy, nothing but a Sigh and
 Groan, and crying, *Lord be merciful;* nay, ye must work out your own Salvation with fear
 and trembling, *Phil. 2. 12.* God is just as well as Merciful, nothing can satisfy his
 Justice,

Justice, but the Satisfaction of Christ, and the Sinner must by Faith see to this, or he shall never obtain Mercy. Beware of Delays, your Life is in your Lip, work while it is to Day. Beware of Prejudices at Christ's Person, his Truths, his Followers or their Sufferings, these groundless Mistakes harden the Heart in Sin, and make it slight the precious Salvation. Beware of Presumption, taking it as a Principle not to be disputed, that ye shall come to the Spirits of just Men made Perfect, without knowing any Scripture Ground for it, only, *I shall have Peace though I walk in the imagination of my own Heart, the Lord will not spare that Man, his anger and jealousy shall smite against him,* Deut. 29. 19, 20. Beware of sensual Pleasures, and Delights of the Flesh, there is an Hook under this sugared Bait, *At the last it bites like a Serpent, and stings like an Adder,* Prov. 23. 32. The Pleasures of the World keep many from the Pleasures of Paradise. Beware of Covetousness and Worldly-mindedness, the rich Man in the Gospel would not forsake his Possessions, and so went away sorrowful and left Christ, *Luke 18. 23.* Beware of indulging any known Sin, especially your Predominants: David says, *I watchfully kept my self from mine Iniquity,* Psal. 18. 23. These are such as the Sinner cannot abide to have reprov'd, the Heart is most set on them, they see in the Face of an Hour of Darkness and Distress, and the Soul is unwilling to part with them; but quit them ye must, or ye shall lose Heaven. 2. Be much in Prayer, and exercise Grace in it, the Psalmist says, *I gave my self to Prayer,* Psal. 109. 4. This unlocks God's Bowels, and these unlock Heaven to Believers, all who gain it have crept hither on their Knees. 3. Set your Heart on the Happiness above, Love puts a Man to use all Means to enjoy the thing beloved. 4. Make Religion your Business that ye mind above all things at all times, *Psal. 139. 18. Embrace all Opportunities for your Souls good, Redeem the time because the days are evil,* Eph. 5. 16. 5. Frequently bind your Hearts to God by secret Vows, every Christian ought not only to enter into Covenant with God at first Conversion, but also constantly to mind, and frequently to renew his Baptismal Covenant Engagements, *Psal. 56. 12. Psal. 119. 106.* 6. Labour for Sincerity, *Prov. 28. 18. Who so walks uprightly shall be saved:* Where this is, God will pass by many Failings, *Numb. 23. 21. Psal. 51. 6.* Coin goes not current without the King's Stamp, neither Grace without Sincerity. It may be asked, How may we discern this Sincerity? Answer, When our Hearts set out after God in his Service, our principal Aim in all we do is his Glory; when we maintain Fervency in holy Duties, what is a dead Form without the Power, *2 Tim. 3. 5. Revel. 3. 16.* When we cherish the Motions of God's Spirit in our Hearts, we may spread Sail but can make no Way without a Gale of Wind, without Heavenly Influences on our Souls; and when we begin and hold on in a Course of holy Obedience, *He that endures to the end shall be saved,* Revel. 2. 10. *Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*

To find out the undoubted Certainty, if ye have a Right to, and in the appointed time shall possess this Happiness of the Spirits of just Men made Perfect, I shall First, Give some Advices to direct you in your Search: Secondly, Some Evidences whereby ye may examine your selves.

As to the First, When ye begin to make this Enquiry, 1. Be sure ye take sound Scripture Marks to try by, and not by such as are common to the Hypocrite. 2. Season and time your Search right, when ye find your Heart in the most composed serious Frame. 3. Beware of giving too much Credit to your own Hearts, they are ready to be partial in passing Sentence on the State of your Soul. 4. Bring up your Hearts to a Willingness to know the worst of your selves, if there has been a fundamental Mistake

to be willing to lay the Foundation of new again, cry oft in Sincerity, Search me and my O God, for there is no wicked way at all in me, Psal. 139. 23. 5. Keep lively on your Hearts an Impression of an approaching Judgment, this will make Conscience deliberate, serious and faithful in its trying Work: Therefore demand of thy Conscience on the Resolution of each Question, Whether it will own and stand to that it now speaks in the great Day, when the Counsels of all Hearts shall be made manifest: 6. Importune the Throne of Grace by Prayer, for Direction of the Holy Spirit in managing this Work: It is the Work of the Spirit to Seal thee to the Day of Redemption, Ephes. 4. 30, and to witness with your Spirits that ye are the Sons of God, Rom. 8. 16: 7. On discovered Weakness and Imperfections, do not presently condemn thy self as an Hypocrite, these should humble, not discourage thee, it is not thy sensible Dulness, lamented Rowings, opposed Distractions, or lamented Unbelief, that argue thee Christless, or exclude thee from the Promises: these break not the Bond of the Covenant, Psal. 89. 30, 34. Psal. 103. 10, 14, notwithstanding thou findest these or the like Grounds of Complaint against thy self: Yet if thou find the following Evidences in your Experience, take Comfort, ye shall one Day be admitted among the Spirits of just Men made Perfect: 1. Dare ye say ye hate Sin as Sin, in its whole Kind, in its very first Motions, not only because it troubles the Conscience, and puts in danger of eternal Ruine, but chiefly, because it is dishonouring to God, and contrait to his holy Nature. 2. Have ye but one Design which above all ye pursue, even to approve your selves to God, To have always a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man, Acts 24. 16. 3. Are ye plain, single, candid and ingenuous in all your Ways, 2 Cor. 1. 12, toward your selves, Impartial: Exact and Suspicious toward God: Hypocrites seek what they would be far from giving Thanks to God if he gave to them, but Believers desire nothing but what they count real Mercy, and would be sincerely thankful for: And do ye deal honestly with Men, not subjecting your Conscience to fleshly Interests, nor shaping your Course to the Humour of the Times: If it be thus, it is a good Sign of Grace in the Inward-Man. 3. Have ye an universal and uniform Respect to all God's Commands at all Times, in all Places and Companies, even to these Precepts that are most contrait to corrupt Nature: Then shall all ye never be ashamed, Psal. 119. 6. 4. Such cannot rest on Attainments, but are still pressing forward for further Degrees of Holiness, Phil. 3. 13, 14. They never list till they get through the Gates into the City. 5. Their Uptaking business is Heart-work; to cleanse their Hearts from wickedness, Jer. 4. 14, to seek the Lord with their whole Heart, Psal. 119. 10, to keep their Heart with all Diligence, Prov. 4. 23, to watch against vain Thoughts, to have a holy, humble and believing Frame of Spirit, to have their Souls fraught with sorrow for Sin, Love to Christ, and Delight in him and his Service: They can take Pleasure in thinking Shame of their own Duties, to be made purely nothing in their own Eye, and in the Eyes of others: If they may thus advance the Lord's Glory and serve him in their Generation, this is their habitual Inclination, and no sudden Pang of Affection, Psal. 119. 20. 6. If ye have a Right to possess Heaven, ye have given Christ Possession of your Mind, Conscience, Will and Affections: If he has taken Possession of thy Mind, it will be much taken up in thinking of him, in admiring his Love and Beauty, and the Sweetness of the Promises: If he be in thy Conscience, it is Purged, and thou shalt be feared to defile it by offending him: Shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God? will be a ready Answer in thy Mouth to every Temptation. And, if he be in thy Affections, they all attend him,

Love,

Love, Delight and Desire in his Presence, and Influences of his Grace, fear of losing his Favour, and Grief for offending his Spirit. *Ps. 119.* He has not given you some Feasts and fine Fruits of Heaven in fasting Interviews betwixt him and your Soul, which ye lean with great Pleasure upon. The Ingredients of this Entertainment are rich Blessings, *1 Pet. 2. 1-3.* great Plenty, no Cost nor Pains spared, *John 6. 35.* *1 Jn. 2. 1-2.* You may feed upon, and make use of all the Ordinances of the Gospel, all the Promises of the Covenant, all the Merits and Purchase of the Death and Intercession of our blessed Redeemer, and all the Influences of his Spirit. There is a noble Variety of all refreshing Cordials, *All in hand, whether Food, or Apparel, or Shelter, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ, and Christ is God, 1 Cor. 3. 23, 24.* There is no ordinary but delicious Food, the richest Rarities, infinitely beyond what the World can afford, Meat the World cannot afford of, *John 4. 32.* Strangers intermeddle with. He has also given some Experiences of his Love by helping you to Duty and perform Duty, by strengthening you in confidence and fidelity, hearing sin of your Deeds, admitting you to some Familiarity, Holiness and Delight in his Love, sweet Religion, joyful Duties, the Testimony to his good Conscience, and Joy in the Lord. These are Effects of Glory, the Graces, Effects, which give Ground to expect in due time ye shall be admitted to the full Enjoyment. *Ps. 119.* Try by the Entertainment you give him when he thus Visits you; do ye make him heartily and cheerfully Welcome, admitting it by your highest Happiness, your begun Heaven, to enjoy his Presence, and possess it to your chiefest Joy, *Ps. 119. 17.* When he treats you so liberally ye will provide something for him; true ye can have nothing worthy of so glorious a Guest, but there is something he delights in, and will accept, even a humble, broken, upright Heart, from a sense of your own Vileness and Christ's Excellency, *1 Jn. 3. 15.* *Chap. 6. 2.* A Heart broken from Sin, and for Sin, that bleeds when it remembers how it has offended Christ, an upright Soul loving Truth in the inward Parts, and that is wholly given to Christ and his Service. You will also allow him your Company, be always in his Presence, your Minds thinking on him, *Ps. 119. 18.* Your Wills and Inclinations to his Service, *Ps. 119. 20.* and your Affections set on him as the most lovely and desirable Object, *Ps. 119. 25.* And you will endeavour a heavenly Conversation like these who are travelling thither, *Phil. 3. 10.* of which I have formerly spoken on this and the preceding Verse. Now are your Appetites more sharpened after spiritual Enjoyments, hungering for a fill of good things, nothing will satisfy but Christ, more Holiness, and Communion with him? If ye can apply in any Measure of Sincerity these Evidences, so as really to find them agreeable to your own Experience, then be of good Cheer, ye shall shortly and surely be set down with the Spirits of just Men made perfect, where your Work shall be to Love, Sing, and Praise for ever and ever.

HE

HEBREWS XII. Verse 24.

And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the Blood of Sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

THE Apostle comes in this Verse to the Fountain, Head and Spring of all the rich Privileges conferred on this noble Society, in their familiar Intimacy and Communion together, and that is, *Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant*. Where, 1. We have the Fountain of our Privileges. 2. Our Access to the same, to be repeated from Verse 22. *But ye are come.* As to the *First*, We have our glorious Redeemer described, 1. From his Name, *Jesus*; 2. From his Office, *The Mediator of the new Covenant*. 3. From a signal Instance of his executing his Office, *And to the Blood of Sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.* As to the *First*, Our Lord is described from his Name, *Jesus*, which signifies the Saviour, *Matth. 1. 21. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his People from their Sins.* He saves from the Guilt of Sin, for by the Merits of his Death he has procured full Pardon and Remission, *Eph. 1. 7. 1 John. 1. 7.* He saves from the Filth of Sin, for he gave himself for us, to purify and redeem us from all Iniquity, *Titus 2. 14.* He pleads that we may be sanctified, *John 17. 17.* and he sends his Spirit to apply it to us, and advance it in us, *2 Thess. 2. 13.* And he saves from the Dominion of Sin, *Rom. 6. 14.* by his Kingly Power he subdues our Idols, and erects a Throne of Grace in our Hearts. 2^d, Our Lord is described from his Office, *The Mediator of the new Covenant*, that is, *The Covenant of Grace*; the Covenant of Works is grown old and done away, but this is the new and better Covenant, *Heb. 8. 6.* which shall never wear old, nor be done away; the new Dispensation of this Covenant under the Gospel, is also better and more lasting than that under the Mosaical Law; but of this Covenant we shall speak afterward. Our Lord is the alone Mediator of this Covenant, *Heb. 8. 6. Chap. 9. 15. 1 Tim. 2. 5.* This Office he undertook to expiate the Breach of the former, and to give his People's Right to the Inheritance of Grace and Glory, the Procurement whereof depends on the Mediation of Christ. The Provision of this Mediator is the greatest Effect of the infinite Wisdom, Love and Grace of God: This is the Center of all his eternal Counsels, in the Womb of this one Mercy all others are contained. Our Lord is here mentioned in Opposition to *Moses*, who as to the Notion of the Word, was a Mediator betwixt God and the People; but as to the special Nature of the Mediation of *Jesus* he had no Interest in it, he was not the Surety of the Covenant unto God on the Part of the People, he did not confirm the Covenant by his own Death as *Jesus* did; but as an *Intermediary*, a middle Person to declare the Mind of God to the People, appointed of God, and chosen by the People themselves, *Exod. 28.* To him as such a Mediator the People came, *1 Cor. 10. 2.* in Opposition thereto Believers come to *Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant*. 3^d, We have the most signal Instance

Instance wherein Jesus executes his mediatory Office on Earth, namely shedding of his Blood for the Confirmation of that Covenant wherof he was Mediator: this Blood we are said to come to, and he describes it two ways, 1. From what it is, it is the Blood of Sprinkling. 2. From what it does, it speaks better things than the Blood of Abel. The first of these is in Allusion to the various sprinklings of Blood by divine Institution under the Old Testament, there was no Blood offered, but part of it was sprinkled, but especially the Blood of the Paschal Lamb, a Type of our Redemption by Christ, Exodus 12. 22. the Blood of the Sacrifices wherewith the Covenant was confirmed at Horeb, Exod. 24. 6. and the Blood of the great Anniversary Sacrifice of Expiation by the High Priest in the holy Place, Lev. 16. 14. This sprinkling expresses the expiating, purging, cleansing Efficacy of this Blood as applied to Believers. 2^{ly}, As this is the Blood of Sprinkling, so it speaks better things than that of Abel, it has a Voice that speaks and pleads, and that either with God, or with Men; it speaks good things absolutely and comparatively, Better things than Abel's, it speaks to God by virtue of Transfusion betwixt the Father and the Son for our Redemption, for the Communication of Mercy, Grace and Glory to the Church; it did so when it was shed, and it continues to do so in the Presentation of it in Heaven by his Intercession. Comparatively, it speaks better things than that of Abel: The Blood of Abel shed by his Brother did speak and cry for Vengeance, or the Punishment of the Murderer; so speaks God himself, Gen. 4. 10. The voice of thy Brothers Blood crieth to me from the Ground; but tho' as to Men the Blood of Christ was shed unjustly, and he was murdered by wicked Hands, even as Abel by the Hands of Cain, yet it did never cry as that of Abel for Vengeance on them by whom it was shed, but as Sinners pleaded for their Pardon, and obtained for some of them who were afterward converted, Acts 2. 38.—42. Secondly, In the Text we have our Access to these rich Privileges the Spring and Source of all our Mercies, to be repeated from Verse 22. But ye are come; by Faith we come to enjoy the Benefits purchased by Christ the Mediator, and by his Blood of Sprinkling, Rom. 3. 25. John 1. 12. John 6. 37. We must therefore accept, and make use of Christ our Lord, according to the Terms of the new Covenant, if ever we get a Right to these glorious Privileges. From this Text thus opened,

Observe 1. That as our Lord Jesus is the great Mediator or Midsman betwixt the offended Majesty of God and rebellious Sinners; so it is the great Duty of all under the Gospel by Faith to accept and make use of him.

Obl. 2. That the new and better Covenant, even the Covenant of Grace established with Christ, is the Foundation of all his Peoples Comforts.

Obl. 3. That the Blood of Sprinkling, the Blood of Christ, comes with greater, better, and sweeter News to Sinners than the Blood of Abel, it speaks better things.

I begin with the first of these Observations, That as our Lord Jesus is the great Mediator or Midsman betwixt the offended Majesty of God and rebellious Sinners; so it is the great Duty of all under the Gospel by Faith to accept and make use of him.

To prepare it for your Use, I shall, 1. Shew how this Name Mediator agrees to our Lord. 2. What are his Qualifications for this Work. 3. How he executes this Office. 4. Why he does execute it. 5. What is included in accepting of this Mediator. 6. Shall press this Duty.

As to the First, This Name Mediator agrees to our Lord, 1. Because he is the middle Person, partaking of the Nature of both Parties; he is God-man, God-Man, Emmanuel, God with us, Matth. 1. 23. or God in our Nature. 2^{ly}, In Respect of his Office,

Office he is the Reconciler, *2 Cor. 5. 19. God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, and has committed to us the Word of Reconciliation, He is the Days-man that lays his Hand upon us both, Job 9. 33. (To speak to) He lays it on God, saying, Wilt thou be reconciled with these Sinners, and thy Justice shall be satisfied; and he lays it on the Sinner, saying, Poor thing, be not discouraged, only accept of me, and thou shalt be justified and saved, 37. He has interposed so as to contrive our Salvation, he made the first Motion of it, before the Mountains were settled, or the Hills, Christ the Wisdom of the Father rejoiced in the habitable Parts of the Earth, and his Delights were with the Sons of Men, Prov. 8. 25, — 31: He thought even of saving the like of you and me, and interposing betwixt disagreeing Parties for that end. With him the Covenant was first established, *Psal. 89. 3. He represented us in that Bargain, Hebr. 2. 13: And he interposed as Surety and Cautioner for us, Hebr. 7. 22. We being but broken irresponsal divour Debtors our selves. 47. He has so far as Mediator interposed betwixt disagreeing Parties, as to proclaim the Tidings of Peace and Reconciliation with his own Mouth, Luke 4. 18, 19, and 21. John 7. 37. as to pay down the Price of his own Blood for our Redemption; He has already brought many Sons to Glory, he is in Heaven interceding for more, John. 17. 20: Hebr. 7. 25. and he sends his Spirit to apply his Purchase to us. In a Word, he is the Author and Finisher of our Faith, he does all our Works in us and for us. 57. He has all Qualifications suitable for this End. This leads me**

Secondly, To shew what Qualifications our Lord has for this Office of Mediator, and
1. He has Interest in both Parties, being God-Man; He is intrusted by both, the Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son, John 5. 22. The Saints trust him, for they have committed their Souls to him, *2 Tim. 1. 12: He is well affected to both, Zealous for the Father's Glory, John 2. 17. and also for our Good, for he gave himself to death for us, to redeem us from all iniquity. And he is such a Guarantee of the Peace, as is Powerful, to whom both disagreeing Parties will Harken and Comply; He is the Father's well beloved Son, Matth. 3. 17. And being of Almighty Power, having immediate Influence on our Spirits, he can easily cause us walk in his Statutes, and keep his Judgments and do them, Ezek. 36. 27. 2. In the managing of his Mediatory-work he was most humble and condescending, he took on himself all the Trouble and Pains, though he — thought it no robbery to be equal with God: yet he took upon him the form of a servant, — And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8. He made no Noise in going about his Work, he did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets, Isa. 42. 2. He sought not popular Applause nor earthly Honour; he refused the Title or Honour of a King, which his Followers pressed him to accept, John 6. 15. He stooped to the lowest Degree of Abasement to Exalt us vile Sinners, to make us the Friends of God. 3. It becomes a Mediator to be Mollifying, to bring Parties from high Conditions they might demand, to abate and accept of less for Peace sake; so does our blessed Days-man. The Lord might have required Personal Satisfaction of us, but he accepts Satisfaction made by our Surety, Gal. 3. 13. Instead of Inherent Righteousness, he accepts that which is Imputed, *1 Cor. 1. 30. And instead of perfect Obedience, he accepts Sincerity, if we honestly endeavour to obey his Will and depend on our Saviour; he graciously pardons our Failings, 2 Cor. 8. 12: 2 Chron. 30. 18, 19. And all this is procured by our blessed Mediator of the new Covenant. Yet tho' the Lord's Terms are so easie, yet we are not able, as being dead in Sin, to perform them; therefore our blessed Mids-Man also works in us so will and to do of his own good Pleasure, Phil. 2. 13. He persuades and enables us to do our Duty by the**

the sweet Bonds of Love: Who would not love and serve such a matchless and gracious Mediator? 4. He is also Affable, to whom both Parties may freely tell their Mind, and enobolom their Secrets: *He came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him*, John 6. 38. He has satisfied all the Demands of Justice, and he is ready to hear all the Entreaties of Mercy: He is also Affable to offending Man, he shewed himself so in the World, he never refused to converse with poor People for their Souls Salvation and Edification, in his greatest Triumph he but rode on a Colt the Foal of an Ass, that any poor Body walking on Foot might converse with him; after his Resurrection he familiarly and frequently discoursed his Disciples, and now when he is in Heaven, he orders us, to ask and ye shall receive, that your joy might be full, John 16. 24. and to come boldly to the throne of his grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. 4. 16. Therefore lay aside mishapen Thoughts of this Mediator, come and accept of him boldly, tell him all your Complaints, pour out your Hearts before him, and fill your Mouths with Arguments. 5. He is also Patient and Long-suffering, to bear with bad Treatment and many Affronts from Parties for Peace sake, he endured the Father's Anger, Isa. 53. 10. *Yea, it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief.* He endured his Wrath, when he cryed, *My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?* when his Soul was sorrowful even unto Death. How many Affronts did he receive from Men? *He was despised and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Griefs, and we hid as it were our Faces from him, he was despised, and we esteemed him not*, Isa. 53. 3. He was Maligned, Reproached, Persecuted and Killed. How oft in the Gospel does he knock at our Hearts, till his Head is filled with the dew, and his Locks with the drops of the night, and we provoke him to go away with Put-
ons, Excuses and Refusals? This his Long-suffering Patience may be for the Comfort of his own Remnant, who are afraid to grieve his Spirit, *He will not chide continually, neither will he keep his anger for ever*, Psal. 103. 9. But for such as abuse the Goodness and Forbearance of God, to as to take Liberty in Sinning from that Doctrine, should lead them to Repentance, know, that ye thus treasure up wrath to the day of wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, Rom. 2. 4, 5. 6. He is a Tender-hearted Mediator, he has conjoined the infinite Mercies of God, and the Bowels of Compassion of an experienced Man, Heb. 2. 17, 18. *Where Sin has abounded, he can make Grace to super-abound.* We are living and lasting Monuments of his Favour, O despise not his gracious Offers in this Gospel. 7. He is also a faithful Mediator, faithful to God who appointed him, Heb. 3. 2. He slights none of his Interests, He orders every Pin of the spiritual House according to his infinite, wise, eternal Council. Faithful to Man, he merited and purchased Salvation for us on Earth, he finished the Work of our Redemption, and now he is gone to Heaven to agent our Cause, to prepare it for us; And in a word, to bring us thither. Put all Confidence in him, he never will nor can deceive you. 8. He is Courageous, the Weight of his Work, the Opposition of Devils and Men, the Sights and Affronts of his Friends, nor his own Bloody Sufferings, did not Break nor Crush him, from finishing our Redemption; and nothing shall hinder him, from bringing on Elect Souls, for whom he is engaged, to Glory. In a Word, He is a Matchless Mediator, he is the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever; He never declined to Interpose for us, he is always present and ready to help us, he never dies nor lays down his Office. What Ground have we to bless God for him, and cheerfully to accept and constantly to employ him?

Thirdly, I proposed to shew how our Mediator executes his Office; This I shall explain by a few Assertions, 1. He is Mediator, not only as to the humane Nature, but both

both Natures are concerned in this Work; for in our Lord's Incarnation, the Divine Nature did assume the Human; he teacheth as Man as an Instrument, but as God with Almighty Power: In his Sufferings the Deity concurred to give Virtue and Efficacy to his Actings as Man, *Heb. 9. 14.* 2. Our Lord has acted as Mediator ever since the first Promise of the Covenant was given to Adam, *Gen. 3. 15.* It is true the Text ascribes to him to be Mediator of the new Covenant, or Testament, by way of Eminency; yet ever since the Fall, Man stood in need of a Mediator, *neither is there any Salvation but by him, Act. 4. 12.* Hence he is called, *A Lamb slain from the foundation of the World, Revel. 13. 8.* for by virtue of his Death and Merits, the Church in all Ages obtained eternal Life. It is true before his Incarnation he did Mediate Secretly, Invisibly and Virtually; but now Manifestly, Visibly and Actually, appearing in the Presence of God for us, as God-Man Mediator. 3. Our Redeemer executes this Office as well in the State of Exaltation as of Humiliation, *Yah. 7. 26.* *This Man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood.* As a Prophet he taught in Person while on Earth and now being exalted to Glory, he teaches by his Word and Spirit. As a Priest, he offered up an acceptable Sacrifice to God by his Death on the Cross, and now in Glory he takes Care the Merits of his Purchase be applied to all for whom it was designed, *He thus for ever so make Intercession for us.* In the Days of his Flesh he governed his Church, though his Kingdom was not of this World, and now he sits at the Father's Right hand, still all his enemies to under his feet. 4. Tho' we are chiefly concerned to know what our Lord does for poor sinful Mortals, yet, as to that Question, *If he be Mediator for Angels?* I Answer, The Scripture seems to appropriate his Mediatorial-work to Mankind, *1 Tim. 2. 5, 6.* *Heb. 2. 16.* certainly he is not the Mediator of Redemption, Reconciliation, or Intercession for Angels; He never designed his Death for these that are fallen of them, *They are kept in chains of Darkness to the Judgment of the great Day,* without the least hair of Hope ever to obtain Favour: And for these that are Elect of them, they having never sinned, it was not necessary our Lord should die to obtain Pardon for them. Nevertheless, Elect Angels may have some Benefit by our Mediator, by him they have the Knowledge of the Mystery of Man's Redemption and Reconciliation, *Ephes. 3. 10.* *1 Peter 1. 12.* By him they are admitted to an honourable Office, to be *Ministering Spirits* to him and his Saints, *Heb. 1. 14.* They are Members of the same Family, *Ephes. 3. 15.* They may be confirmed in their blessed Estate, and receive many other Mercies from him, which we cannot Recount; For all which they *sing the Praises of the Lamb for ever and ever.* But 5. The principal Work of our Mediator is for Elect Sinners, for them he gave himself a Ransom, *1 Tim. 2. 6.* Them he brings from Darkness to Light, translates from the Kingdom of Darkness to his own Kingdom, awaking their Consciences by a Discovery of Sin and Guilt; alluring them to himself, by discovering his matchless Fulness and Suitableness to supply all their Wants; them he actually persuades and enables to renounce Sin, to dedicate themselves to his Service, and accept of him for Righteousness and Strength. In them he implants Grace, Nourishes and Quickens it by his holy Spirit, Kills their Lusts, Strengthens them to Duty, Comforts them in Distress, Builds them up in their most holy Faith: And in a Word, Prepares them for Glory, and brings them to possess it.

Fourthly, I proposed to shew why our Lord does execute this Office of Mediator; And 1. It is for the Glory of God, that he who is of Infinite Majesty should keep at such Distance with Parties who have done the Wrong, as not to deal immediately with them, but by the Mediation of his own Son the chief Courtier in Heaven. Infinite

Wisdom is glorified in reconciling the different Pleas of Mercy and Justice; Mercy is exalted in pardoning the Sinner, and Justice in punishing the Cautiouser substitute in our Room. Satan is taken in his own Plot; in Man's Nature Man was ruined, but Christ in our Nature did again restore us: Divine Love is Exalted, God's Power could have made many Worlds, but his Love could go no higher than this, *God so loved the World that he gave his own Son*; He loved us more than Angels, he never sent his Son to redeem them; yea more than for a time he shewed to his own Son, for he was willing to see him, Groaning, Bleeding and Dying, that we might be delivered from the *second Death*, and might not Roar under the Wrath of God to Eternity. Divine Justice and Holiness does not so Shine by all the Judgments inflicted on the World for Sin, nor by the Groans of the Damned; as in this rather as Sin should go unpunished, he exacted compleat Satisfaction on his own Son substitute in our Room. God's Power is discovered in assisting Christ in Miracles, and in all his Mediatory-work, and in carrying weak Saints through innumerable Difficulties to Glorie; his Patience appears in his waiting on our Relenting and Repenting; His Faithfulness in performing Promises to his Children, and Threats against the wicked World; and his All-sufficiency in communicating all Fulness to Christ's humane Nature, and through him to us suitable to all our Wants. These Perfections of the Divine Nature had never so appeared, if Man had not Fallen, and if Christ had not restored him as Mediator of the New Covenant; but now they shine with a Radiant Lustre. 2. Hereby a distinct Glory arises to the three Persons of the ever blessed *God-head*, Glory to the Father for contriving the Work of Redemption, for assisting and accepting the Son in it, for giving the Elect to be Redeemed by him, for appointing a rich Measure of Grace to every one of them, and entrusting his Son with dispensing of the whole, *John* 5. 22, 23. Glory to the Son in consenting to come and suffer in our Room and in our Nature, for performing actually all he engaged to do, all that was necessary for our Salvation, for being Prophet, Priest and King to his Church, *The Government being laid on his Shoulders*, his People depending intirely upon him, and he communicating of his Grace richly to them. And Glory to the Holy Spirit, he unites the Humane Nature to the Divine, he anoints Christ even as Mediator, with a Super-abundant Measure of Grace, *Isa.* 61. 1, 2. *Isa.* 11. 1, — 6: and his People with as much of it as is necessary for them, 1 *John* 2. 27. 3. There could be no other Way for purchasing Salvation to lost Sinners, but by this Mediator, who being true God, was capable to satisfy Justice, and support under Divine Wrath for our Sins, and being true Man substitute in Sinners Room, constitute their Representative, was most fit to bear Punishment due to them, and expiate their Guilt, to satisfy for, and purchase Salvation to us: He who was the Son of God, was most fit to make us Sons. He who Created the World to Restore the World, and he who was the second Adam to deliver from Sin and Misery brought in by the first Adam: In a Word, No Access to God but by him, as was represented by *Moses*, *Exod.* 20. 19. No Union nor Communion, no saving Mercy but through him. 4. By this Mediator not only is our Salvation secured and purchased, but it is also bettered to the Elect, than if the Covenant of Works had yet been standing, and Man had never Sinned, for our Salvation is founded on a better Bottom, not on the changeable Freedom of Man's Will, but upon Christ who is *mighty to save*; and since he cannot fail, neither shall the Happiness of the Elect, *Psal.* 89. 19, 30, — 37. Now, we may have a greater Boldness to go to a Mediator, Advocate and Intercessor in our Nature, and now the Song in Heaven shall be raised higher, there shall be a continual Praising of *the Lamb that was slain, who has redeemed*

redeemed us to God by his Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation, Revel. 5. 9.

Fifthly, I proposed to shew what is included in accepting of this Mediator. Now this supposes, 1. A Distance betwixt God and the Soul, to be made up by coming to Christ, Eph. 2. 12. This the Soul being convinced of, sees an indispensable Necessity of not only giving inire Credit that he is, but of coming to him by lively Faith as their Saviour and Mediator. 2ly, The Soul despairs of Salvation any other way, after all other Methods are tried, they turn to this as the only one that remains, being persuaded there is no other Name given under Heaven whereby we can be saved, but by the Name of Jesus. 3ly, There is a divine drawing Power infinitely beyond their own natural Abilities, determining the Soul to accept of the Saviour, John 6. 44. 4ly, A Voluntariness in the Soul in coming; the Father draws, yet there is nothing of Co-action in it, but does with overcoming Sweetness persuade the Will, it is not forced nor driven, but comes, being made willing by a Day of his Power. 5ly, It supposes Hope and Expectation in the coming Soul, if it had no Hope, why does it come? No, Hope is the Spring of this Motion; John 6. 37. Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. 6ly, A seen All-sufficiency in Christ to answer all the Soul's Wants, that He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him, Heb. 7. 25.

This accepting the Mediator consists in these, 1. In the Abrenuntiation of all other Hopes and Dependencies whatsoever; Natural, Sinful or Moral Self must be abandoned else Christ cannot be embraced, they who establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted to the Righteousness of God, Rom. 10. 3. 2ly, In casting open the everlasting Doors of your Heart to precious Christ, Rev. 3. 20. without which, no coming to, nor closing with him; he alone must have the full Possession and Throne of our Hearts, the choicest of our Affections must center in him. 3ly, In embracing and receiving the blessed Jesus as offered in the Gospel, John 1. 12. Faith speaks thus to, and acts on the Lord, Whereas I am Ignorant and Blind, unable to direct my own Path, I bless thee who becomes a Guide to the Blind, I depend on the Guidance of thy Word and Spirit, so be directed thereby through all the Steps of this weary Wilderness, till I arrive at the promised Land above: Whereas I am Guilty, liable to the Wrath and Anger of a Holy, Sin revenging God, and unable ever to satisfy thy Justice for the least Sin; I bless thee who has found out a Ransom, who has paid the invaluable Price of thy own Blood for lost Sinners; Perpetual, I depend by the Merits of this Blood to be saved from Sin, Wrath, and all Misery, Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal; and to get a Right to all Blessings: I have nothing but this to look to for Salvation, on this I venture my Soul, and hope by it to be brought to the purchased Possession of eternal Life. And thou has not only purchased Salvation to thy own People, but livest for ever to see the same applied; I depend on thee, that by thy Intercession all thou has purchased shall be made effectual for my Soul's Good. And whereas my Nature is rebellious against thy Commands, my Enemies, Sin, Satan and the World are too strong for me; I bless thee who has conquered all my Foes: I embrace thee and depend on thee to subdue my rebellious Corruptions, to give me Grace to resist, and finally to obtain the Victory over all my spiritual Enemies; to sanctify my Soul by thy holy Spirit, and to carry as becomes a willing Subject to thee my only Lord and Sovereign; in doing and suffering whatever thou requires of me; thine I shall be, thee I shall serve, only strengthen me so to do.

Sixthly, Let me now press you to this great Duty, and 1. Consider you will gain many Advantages by it that Moment you receive Christ on Gospel Terms, all your Debts to Justice are paid, and ye are discharged; you have been every Day taking on
since

Since ye came to the World, and Death and the Devil will shortly be on thee, but all is taken away on the Day of thy Espousals to Christ, Eph. 1. 7. It will raise you in Honour beyond Angels, they are sent out to Minister to the Bleis of Salvation, Heb. 1. 14. Psal. 24. 7. This will instate you in a firm Title to an eternal Inheritance in Heaven, Rom. 8. 17. *As Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ*, and ye shall be presented by Christ to the Father pure and spotless, it would make your Hearts lighter with Joy to read what the Scripture says about this, he will bring you to his Father in shining Beauty of perfect Holiness, *without Spot or Wrinkle*, Eph. 5. 27. *They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing, and enter to the Kings Palace*, Psal. 45. 15. *They shall be presented faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy*, Jude Ver. 24. 25. But if ye refuse to accept of Christ, ye shall underlie the unpardoned Guilt of all your Sins, the Curse of the Law, the Wrath of God, and the Pains of the damned, John 3. 36. *Mark 16. 16. Our Lord will come in flaming Fire to take Vengeance on them that know not God, and they not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction*, 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9. 34. Your Breath is uncertain, your Enjoyment of Gospel Opportunities is as uncertain, ye cannot give a solid Reason for one Moments Delay of so great a Concern; why then do ye ruin your Souls? 44. Ye can never expect a fitter and fairer Season for doing it than this Day, *Now is the accepted Time; now is the Day of Salvation*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. if ye now weigh not Anchor, ye may be Wind-bound to your dying Day.

Let me conclude this Doctrine, by giving you a few Directions for your successful managing this Duty; and 1. Think with your selves what this may cost you, Luke 14. 28. *Ye must abide by Christ in Storms, Follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes; it is eternal Death by the Martial Law of Heaven to run away from Christ's Standard in the Day of Battel*, Heb. 10. 38, 39. 24. Having thus deliberated, let not thy missing some positive Qualifications in thy self scare thee from casting thy Soul at Christ's Feet with thy hearty Consent to all his Terms. 34. Distrust not his Ingenuity in his Offers to believing Souls; believe it, he speaks his very Heart when he says, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, Matth. 11. 28. *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*, John 6. 37. 45. Cry aloud to God to exert his Divine Power in disposing thee for this solemn Work, fill your Mouths with Arguments enforcing this Suit, you have the Command of God obliging you to it, 1 John 3. 23. therefore it is no Presumption in you to attempt it, you have the Promise of his gracious Acceptance, John 6. 37. and the Example of others who did accept as Patterns to encourage these who shall hereafter believe, 1 Tim. 1. 16. There is no other way to escape the Curse and gain the Blessing, therefore ye must set about it, and depend on the Lord for Assistance. 54. Make a resolved Venture on Christ, let the Issue be what it will, tho' ye have not Assurance ye shall be accepted and pardoned; yet as Esther when she adventured to go to the King for the Safety of her People, said, *If I perish, I perish*, Esther 4. 16. and as the Lepers at the Gate of Samaria said, *Why sit we here till we die? If we enter to the King, we die there; therefore let us fall to the Host of the Syrians*, 2 Kings 7. 3, 4. You have greater Encouragement, for you have God's Promise of Acceptance: 64. Entertain high and suitable Esteem of the free Grace of God, and Mercy of Christ, which infinitely exceeds our narrow Conceptions, Isa. 54. 7, 8, 9. 74. Be not discouraged in the Way of coming to Christ, and closing with him, tho' no Peace nor Comfort should come in at the first doing of it; yea tho' there should be an Increase of Trouble thereupon, for ye are in a State of Peace, tho' ye want the Sense of Peace.

8y, In your treating with, and coming to him, have a care of all secret Reserves, these will spoil the Bargain betwixt Christ and the Soul, *Psal. 66. 18. If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear me.* 9y, Shut up your Covenant with Solemn Engagements to be the Lords, *Isa. 44. 3. One shall say, I am the Lord, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.* You may Swear, Sign and Subscribe it secretly and solemnly before the Lord, and Seal it at a Communion Table. 10y, Take Care of the Way and Manner of coming; come to Jesus, receive him, and surrender yourselves to him entirely without Reservation, he will either have your All or nothing; mind with Fear what became of *Ananias and Sapphira* their Reserve. Come, never to part with him again, what is true is lasting, but Paint soon washes off, there must be no Clause of Revocation in this Bargain, ye must be his Servants for ever, *Exod. 21. 6.* and perform his Statutes always even to the end, *Psal. 119. 112.* Come freely and voluntarily, not from Force but of free Choise, your Offering must be willingly, with the whole Heart, *Exod. 25. 2.* O for many *Amazons* here to Day, willingly to offer themselves to the Lord, *2 Chron. 17. 16.* Come speedily and presently without Delays, these are dangerous. Come humbly, from a Conviction of thy Wretchedness and Unworthiness, crying, *Behold I am vile.* And come Solemnly, with all the Sails of your Affections up, and Resolutely and Courageously, knowing, tho' Satan should muster thousands of Difficulties, this is Duty indispensibly necessar. I proceed to

Observe 2. That the new and better Covenant, even the Covenant of Grace established with Christ, is the Foundation of all his Peoples Comforts.

To Illustrate this Doctrine, I shall, First, Explain the Nature of this Covenant. Secondly, How it is Established with Christ the Mediator. Thirdly, The Excellency of it. Fourthly, The Terms of it. And Fifthly, Apply the Whole.

I return to the First, And shall explain briefly the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, by the following Assertions. 1. Man having lost a State of Innocency, and come into a fallen sinful Estate under the Wrath of God, and Curse of the Law, it was impossible for him again to recover Happiness, unless he could have obeyed the Law Personally, Completely and Perpetually, and satisfied Justice for his former Offence; neither of which he was able to do; not the former, for he was dead in sin, unable to do any thing really well-pleasing in the sight of God; not the latter, for being a finite and sinful Creature, it was impossible for him to satisfy the Justice of God, who required an infinite and sinless Satisfaction. 2. Man being in this State, the second Person of the Trinity, our Lord Jesus, stepped in and offered to do that in our Room and Place, we were unable to do for our selves, *Psal. 40. 6, 7, 8. Sacrifice and Offering thou dost not desire, — Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy Law is within my heart.* *Hebr. 10. 10.* By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. He was able to obey the Law fully, and alse to satisfy the Justice of God, being an infinite Person, true God, taking on our Nature, substitute in our Room, yet free from Sin. The Father being well pleased with this Proposal of the Son, did encourage him in this Work, promising to him Assistance in the Work, *Isa. 42. 1.* Acceptance in his Performance, he was the Father's Delight, *Isa. 42. 1.* *Matth. 3. 17.* a numerous Seed of Jews and Gentiles, *Psal. 2. 8.* *Isa. 49. 8.* that he should finish his Work, and triumph over all his Enemies, *Isa. 53. 12.* and in end Reign in Glory, as the Head of the Elect Company. 3. This being concluded, there were a number of Elect Souls given to Christ to be redeemed

deemed from the Pit by the Price of his Blood, who should lay hold upon the Satisfaction and Obedience of Christ in their Room, and thus be admitted to Communion with God here, and everlasting Glory hereafter. 4. This being the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, the Parties in it are the glorious *Jehovah*, and miserable sinful *Man*. O the infinite Distance and vast Disproportion, Heaven setting out to match with Earth, the Beauty of Holiness confederates with a Mass of Impurity! The first Party is God All-sufficient, able to bestow all things upon us Originally and Infinitely Wise, which shines in the Contrivance of this Contract, strictly just so as not to pass Sin without Satisfaction, and yet willing to shew Mercy to miserable Sinners. The other Party fallen Man, is the Transcript of all the Contraries, yea of all Evil, as poor as a raging Devil and a deceitful Heart could make him, robbed of all his Riches, he has neither in nor on him, and yet thinks far other ways of himself, he is *Black as the Tents of Kedar*, has nothing of *the Curtains of Solomon*, he carries the very Hue of Hell with him, this is Natural to him, he was born so, *Ezek. 16. 1. — 8.* It is Universal, his whole Soul and Body is defiled by Sin, and it is Durable, cleaves to him as the *Ethiopian's colour and Leopard's spots*: He has no Wit, he is an arrant Fool, for he refuses to Covenant and Match with Christ, tho' he came from Heaven to Travel and Mediate in this Bargain. But Man is to be considered in this Covenant, not only as in himself Miserable; but as chosen in Christ, *Ephes. 1. 4.* and as represented by him; for fallen Man not being capable to Interpose himself, our blessed Redeemer became our Representative, *Psal. 89. 3, 4, 19, 20. Isa. 59. 20, 21.* He transacted for us, he became Surety for our Debt and our Duty, for our performing the Condition, *Hebr. 7. 22. John 6. 37.* And when we actually believe and accept of his Obedience and Satisfaction for us, he transfers and assigns to us his Right, even a Title to all the Promises of Grace and Glory.

If it be asked, How can a glorious lovely Lord take such a Party by the Hand in Covenant? *Answer*, 1. Black and vile as this Bride is, she is given by the Father's eternal Election to Christ, and in this is laid the first Foundation of this happy Match betwixt our Lord and her. 2. Tho' our Lord be High, yet he is full of low condescending Love, no way attracted by the Excellency of the Object beloved, and being so free, bestows it self frankly on the Vilest. 3. How low soever our Nature be in regard of Creation, *a little lower than Angels*; yet it is not a little advanced beyond the *Angelical Nature*, by reason of the *Personal Union* of the Humane Nature with the Divine, in the Person of the Mediator of this new Covenant, Man's Nature is now Nobilitate in the Court of Heaven. 4. This new Covenant was absolutely necessary, in order to procure Man's Salvation, to procure and better his Happiness; and it does exceedingly declare the Glory of God's glorious Perfections, and of the Persons of the ever blessed Trinity, as is already discoursed in the Reasons why Christ executes the Office of Mediator on the preceding Doctrine.

Secondly, I am to shew how this Covenant is established with Christ; And 1. In respect he is the principal Party Contriving and Contracting in it, he rejoiced in the Thoughts of saving Sinners from Eternity, *Prov. 8. 30.* 2. He represented the Elect in the Covenant, *1 Cor. 15. 45.* *The first Adam was made a living Soul, the last Adam was made a quickning Spirit.* The first Adam who represented his Seed in the Covenant of Works, fell and ruined his Seed; but Christ the second Adam, who represented the Elect in the Covenant of Grace could not fail, so his Covenant and Seed shall stand for ever, *Psal. 89. 34. — 37.* 3. Our Lord is Mediator of this Covenant, but of this we have already spoke. 4. *He is the Surety of it, Hebr. 7. 22.* He gave in his Bond

registrate

registrar in the Court Books of Heaven, to satisfy Justice for us, *Psal. 40. 6.* — 9. Never was such a Surety as our Lord, he became Cautioner for us, tho' he knew we were divour Debtors, unable to pay the least Farthing of all our Debt, but he must pay all for us, and could never recover it from us; yet was he Surety for an innumerable Company, even for all the Redeemed, and for an infinite Sum of all their Debts. Yea, not only for our Debt, but for our good Behaviour while in the World, *Ezek. 26. 27.* 5. He is the Witness of the Covenant, *Isa. 55. 4.* God's Witness, who has Sealed the Truth with his Blood, and raises up innumerable Ministers and Servants, who by their Works, Preachings, Writings and Sufferings, bear Witness to the same: If ye receive not his gracious Offers, ye shall be Inexcusable, he will be a Witness against your Sin, *Mal. 3. 5.* But if you serve him aright, to commend your Grace as he did *Nathaniel*, *John 1. 49.* he will commend your good Works here and hereafter, at the great Day of Appearance. 6. He is the Messenger of the Covenant, *Mal. 3. 1.* He brings the Message of Salvation from Heaven to Earth, he is at Pains in declaring the same, he proclaims the acceptable Year of the Lord; and he reports whether ye entertain his Message or not. 7. He is the very Sum and Substance of the Covenant, *He is given for a Covenant of the People*, *Isa. 42. 6.* All the Engagements of it are summed up in him, the Father gives him to us, and that is all we need; and all we can give to God, is to look to the Satisfaction of the Son in our Room. He is the Sum of all the Promises, *2 Cor. 1. 20.* He is the Purchaser and Conveyer of them, they all flow from him as Streams from a Fountain.

In the third Place, I am to speak of the Excellency of this Covenant, which may appear to be very great, if considered either *Comparatively* or *Absolutely*. 1. *Comparatively*, It is by far more excellent than the Covenant of Works made with *Adam* in Innocency, better in its End, it tends more to exalt free Grace, Mercy, Love, Wisdom and Patience of God, to declare the distinct Glory of the Persons of the blessed God-head, and to secure Man's Salvation; better in its Foundation, being grounded on electing and redeeming Love, easier in its Commands, for the Assistance of the Spirit and Strength of Christ, helps to Performance; and Sincerity is accepted where Perfection is wanting, *2 Cor. 8. 12.* Better in its Promises, *Hebr. 8. 6.* Pardon of Sin, Repentance for it, the Purchase of the Death of Christ, the Influences of the Spirit, and Perseverance in Grace are promised in this, of which not a word in the former Covenant. It is more solemnly confirmed by God's Word and Oath, *Hebr. 6. 17, 18.* By Christ's Death, and by visible Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is better in the Condition, Faith, which is surer, Christ having engaged for our believing, *John 6. 37.* And Easier and Sweeter in its Performance, than perfect, personal and perpetual Obedience, which was the Condition of the former Covenant. And it is better in its Privileges, now we are Sons, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ, Breaches will not make it void, for all is secured in the Hands of a never-failing Mediator, whose Testament this Covenant of Grace is; no Man may add or change one Word in it. Therefore think not of Salvation by leaning to your own Righteousness, this is the Method of the old and broken Covenant, but come bless God for this glorious Contrivance of Grace, accept of it, and live like a People so highly privileged. 2ly, This Covenant of Grace, if considered *Absolutely*, is very Excellent; Take a View of a few of its Properties, as 1. It is Free and Gracious, *Deut. 7. 7, 8.* The Lord loved you, because he loved you: It is founded on the free Love of God and Mercies of Christ, Faith is freely given to us the worst of Sinners. God saw no Merit in us, and no Good could be expected from us. Let this make you humble in your own Eyes,

Eyes, and think not to come with a Price in your Hand to buy the Blood of the Covenant, but come sensible of Sin, Wants and Misery, and accept the Offers of Grace. 2. It is Everlasting, *I/a.* 45. 3. *Jer.* 32. 40. It was begun from Eternity, *Jer.* 31. 3. And it will abide to Eternity, Pardon of Sin, Peace with God, and other Mercies in it are everlasting. Therefore Believers do not put your selves to the Rack, by thinking it will fail or change, but make it sure to your selves, and then your Happiness shall never fail. 3. It is Sure, fixed on Christ the sure Rock of Ages, the *Foundation* and *Corner-Stone*, its Mercies, Promises and Blessings all sure and certain, tho' all things in the World be but vanity and vexation of Spirit, and like *Waters that pass away*, yet may Believers find Consolation in this amidst all Troubles. 4. This Covenant is well contrived for our Redeemer's Glory and the Elects Good, *Ordered in all things*, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. 5. It is Satisfying, *All is yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is Gods*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. 23. *I will be thy God* is the very Cream and Quintessence of the Covenant, God gives himself by Covenant to be the Souls own, when the Covenanting Soul in answer to this is made to Echo out another Relative, *My God*, and, *My Lord*: O what infinite Suavity is conceived therein! For he is instead of all sweet Relations, *A Father*, to Protect and Defend you; *A Husband*, to Love and Cherish you; *A Friend*, to Support you in Distress; all pleasant and desirable Things are in him: Hence ye are invited to *taste and see how good he is*, *Psal.* 34. 8. Every thing for Safety and Defence is in him, he is a *Sun and Shield*, a *Rock, Fortress and Deliverer*, a *Buckler*, a *Horn of Salvation*, and a *strong Tower*: And all things for Profit, Advantage, and Life, God is good when Gold is gone: God is our Inheritance, Riches, Portion and All, *Psal.* 73. 25, 26. What wants thou Covenanting Soul that he will not give thee? Is it Pardon? Lo it is promised, *Jer.* 31. 34. Is it Love and the Light of his Countenance? How much is in that Promise? *Jer.* 32. 40, 41. — *I will not turn away from them, to do them good*; — *Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good*, — Is it Gospel Ordinances? See *Ezek.* 37. 26, 27. — *I will see my Sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My Tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my People*. You may have Light to guide you in the Way, the Raiment of his Righteousness to cover you, the fine Gold of Grace to Enrich you, *Revel.* 3. 18. Strength to support under Duties and Difficulties, *I/a.* 40. 31: And in a word, every thing ye want. 6. It is a Personal Covenant, your Father's engaging into it will not bring you to Heaven; All the Saints entered Personally to it themselves, and so must ye do, if ever ye arrive at Glory.

XX In the fourth Place, it remains that I speak of the Terms of this Covenant, our Mediator offers on his Part, to give us *Grace and Glory*, and all we stand in need of, *Psal.* 84. 11. To be our God, and after thou has honestly stricken Hands with him in the Covenant, nothing shall ever divorce thee and him, Temptations, Crosets, Losses, Devils, Idols, Plagues, neither Death nor Adultery, *Psal.* 89. 34. *Rom.* 8. 38. But on the Sinner's Part, it is necessary, 1. That you renounce all Competitors with Christ, and take him in Room of them all. 2. That ye shall cheerfully take your Venture on the same Bottom with Christ, the same Loss and Life, Scant and Want, Comfort and Cross, as he carries out for you, never to Repent nor take your Word again. 3. That you dedicate and give away your selves to him, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. 2 *Cor.* 30. 8. His Soul to be Repaired, being a Piece of maimed Workman-ship by Sin, he gives it to the Lord to be cleansed and washed in the Fountain of his Blood to be kept from Sin and complying with Temptations, that Sufferings may be Sanctified, and Death may be a pleasant Passage in to Glory. He gives his Understanding to be Enlightened to know what is necessary

necessary for Salvation; your Wills, cheerfully to obey his Precepts; your Consciences, that they may impartially challenge you for Sin; and your Affections, that they may be set in the right Channel, that ye may love God as the chief Good, hate Sin as the greatest Evil; rejoice in his Favour, fear his Frowns, expect his Mercy, and believe in his Word. Ye dedicate your Body to him, Rom. 12. 1. as ready to part with Bodily Life when he calls, as willing every Member of your Body should serve him; your Tongue to speak his Praise, your Ears to hear his Voice, your Hands to act, and your Feet to move in his Way; your Children to be his in Death or Life, your Riches to be at his Disposal for Relief of the Poor, for Good of the Church, and not merely for Pride and Luxury; your Places, and Stations, Gifts and Endowments, to be laid out for his Service and Honour: In a word, that ye may be intirely the Lords, and not for another, from henceforth and for ever. 4. That ye cordially accept of him, having heard an Offer of precious Christ in the Gospel, like that *Isa. 55. 1. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.* And being convinced of the Excellency of these offered Mercies, and the need ye stand in of them, ye bless God for them, and readily accept of the great God as your chief Good, the supreme Spring and Source of all your Happiness, ye accept of the Son of God as your Teacher to guide you by his Word and Spirit, till ye arrive at Glory, of his Satisfaction and the Merits of his Death, to be delivered thereby from the Wrath and Curse of God, ye accept of the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier, ye cordially believe Divine Revelations, comply with Divine Institutions and Ordinances, not to quite one Hoof of them, ye acquiesce in Divine Providences, Merciful or Afflicting, as being the Lord's doing, and give Obedience to the Divine Law, as Holy, Just and Good. Now, These are the Conditions and Terms, but here is our Comfort, that what he enjoins as Conditions on our Part, he engages to make out and be forthcoming for on his Part: As for Example, He requires in us Spiritual Knowledge, but he also promises to bestow it, *Jer. 31. 34. They shall all know me from the least even to the greatest of them.* He enjoins sound Humiliation, but so it is promised, *Ezek. 36. 26. I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh.* He commands us to advance in Sanctification, and in a heavenly, holy Conversation; yet that is also a Condition contained in the Promise, *Ezek. 36. 25. — 27. Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your Iniquities and Idols will I cleanse you, — And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments, and do them.* So that as ye should seriously endeavour to perform what the Lord requires of you, so to depend upon him for the Strength and Furniture contained in the Promise to enable you to do it. O for such a Frame this Day!

Use 1. Of Conviction and Reproof to these who are yet Strangers to Covenanting, and they are of several Sorts; 1. Who absolutely flight and will not so much as take the Terms thereof under Consideration, being invited, they make Light of it, *Matth. 22. 5.* they never weary of choosing worldly Happiness, no time by Night nor Day, but soon weary of Christ, *Psal. 81. 11. Israel would have none of me.* Might not this break a Heart of Adamant; well, what will be the parting Word? *Verf. 12. So I gave them up to their own Hearts Lust.* And *Isa. 66. 3, 4. Yea they have chosen their own Ways, and their Soul delighteth in their Abominations: I also will choose their Delusions, and will bring their Fears upon them.* 2^d. Others more tacitely and virtually refuse, conniving at the Dominion of Sin in their Hearts, which is inconsistent with new Covenant Terms:

Will thou choose to be Serpents Seed, and refuse to be God's Child? 3ly, Some openly disown their Interest in God and his Covenant, from a Principle of Atheism and Profaneness; make Covenanting with God a Matter of their Mocking; the Day is coming, when the Proudest of these sottish Ignorants shall bespeak honest Covenanters with God, as Pharaoh did Moses, *I have sinned against your God, in that I have said, I will not give thee.* 4ly, Who presume on this Covenant Relation without Ground, the Witch *Balaam* can say very confidently, *I cannot go beyond the Word of the Lord,* and yet it was in his Heart to curse all the covenanted People of God: Such are of their Father the Devil, and the Lusts of their Father they will do, *he is a Liar, and the Father of it,* John 8. 44. 5ly, Some would be in Hands with this Covenant, but must Capitulate with the the Mediator of it, and have Terms of their own soyked in, priggging for Elbow-room to their Lusts; dare ye thus impose on God, and reflect Dishonour on him as Deficient in chalking out his own Terms? 6ly, Who pretend to enter in Covenant with God, *Deut. 5. 27. All that the Lord our God will say, we will hear it and do it;* but ah they are but flattering God with their Mouth, and lying to him with their Tongue, *Psal. 78. 36. Jer. 42. 5. and 20. compared.*

Use 2. Of Exhortation. O make earnest of entering into this Covenant with God, O Strangers, consider, 1. This is the great Design of the Gospel, God has found out and sent a Mediator to carry on this Treaty. 2ly, All the Cloud of Witnesses proclaim this to be the path Way to Heaven, it was the Practice of *Noah*, Gen. 6. 18. of *Abraham*, Gen. 15. 1.—6. of *Hana* and of *Jacob* in that remarkable Instance, Gen. 28. 20, 21. of *David*, 2 Sam. 23. 5. *Psal. 16. 2.* and of all the New Testament Believers, 2 Cor. 8. 5. If we design their End, we must use their Means. 3ly, It is indispensibly necessary to the Practice of Christianity, the Christian Religion contains Propositions or Truths to be believed, Precepts or Duties to be practised, Promises or Rewards to be enjoyed; now all these are linked together by an indissoluble Bond, it is in vain to expect the Benefits without a due Performance of the Conditions. 4ly, The great uniting Grace of Faith, whereby Christ and Believers are knit together, necessarily implies Covenanting with God as our Duty, carrying in it not only an Assent of the Understanding, but a Consent of the Will to embrace Christ on his Terms, and this is the Sum of the Covenant, without ye do this, ye are under Condemnation, *John 3. 18.* and shall endure everlasting Wrath, *Vers. 36.* shall be damned. *Mark 16. 16.* tho' ye be spared a little, yet shall afterward be destroyed, *Jude Vers. 5.* 5ly, Our baptismal Vows oblige us to Covenant, and renew the same; the whole of the Covenant is contained in Baptism, for we are Baptised in Name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost: That is, we owne the Father for our Creator and Benefactor, the Son as our Redeemer and Mediator, our Head and Husband; and the Holy Spirit to enlighten, quicken and sanctifie us. Now, there is a Necessity to renew this when adult; thousands go to Hell with Baptismal Water on their Face; if *Israel* be uncircumcised in Heart, they shall be ranked and punished with *Egypt, Edom, Ammon and Moab*, *Jer. 9. 25, 26.* they shall be as *Ethiopians* to the Lord: Well then, seeing this is our indispensable Duty, to the Mediator of the new Covenant is come here the Day, to spread Heavens Love Contract a broad-band open before you in this Congregation, and this is his Errand, that ye sign the same in all the Articles thereof; so that if it be not a Bargain, it will be your own Fault, I put it home to every Man and Woman's Conscience within these Doors, High and Low, Rich and Poor, Master and Servant, Parent and Child, that this Day ye enter Covenant with the great God; ye that are Strangers to it, and ye who have be-

fore-done it; that ye renew it: We must return Answer to him who sent us, what shall we say? Will ye take the Mediator of the new Covenant at his so noble and generous Offer, yea or no? Lay your hands to your Hearts, Sirs, now is the Day of Salvation. The Question comes to this, Will ye keep your Covenant with Hell and the Devil, or will ye enter Covenant with the great God? If ye refuse God's, ye grant the Devil's Desire, that he shall have you, Soul and Body eternally, and that as your own Choice;—Oh do not such an abominable thing! Our Lord and Master expects that ye will Covenant with and accept of him, that there will be no halting among you to Day; are ye in Doubt whether to be saved or damned? Is it not a Wonder of Mercy that the great God should treat with you Rebels in a way of Covenant, that he should offer you so great Mercies, that the Terms should all be for your Advantage, that ye should get a Covenant Right even to common Mercies; Therefore let me obtest you in the Bowels of Christ, and by the Love ye bear to your Souls, accept of this Offer, so shall Death be easie, and the great Judgment an Entrance into everlasting Joy; but if ye refuse, it shall be the Introduction to eternal Misery and Woe!

Use 3. Of Direction to these in Covenant with God, 1. Be much in Thankfulness, *Psal.* 16. 2, 7. Thou shalt be made up for ever, this Covenant is the Extract of thy Charter Right to Glory; cry out, *O magnifie the Lord with me*, who has made a Child of Wrath an Heir of Life, passed by thousands better than me in many Respects, and made *The Lines to fall to me in pleasant Places*. This Covenant sets thee above petty Toys of the World, and works thee up to a more noble and generous Temper, *Psal.* 139. 17, 18. *Psal.* 84. 10. *Heb.* 11. 24. it puts much Work in thy Hand, and rich covenanted Strength to do it, the Strength of Ordinances and Duties, *Psal.* 84. 7. the Strength and Help of the Saints Prayers, *Coloss.* 1. 9,—12. and above all, the Strength of Christ, *Isa.* 45. 24. It makes all thy Services and Performances acceptable, tho' attended with great Weakness, *Mal.* 3. 16, 17. It sets you free from the Curse of the Law, from the Power of Sin and Satan, *Rom.* 16. 26. and from the Spirit of Bondage, *Rom.* 8. 15. 2ly, Improve covenanted Grace, Trade with it in Order to its Increase, esteem and exalt the Love of God, grow humble in a sight of thy own Vileness, grow in Grace proportionably, *2 Pet.* 1. 5,—8. Giving all Diligence, add to your Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godliness; and to Godliness, brotherly Kindness; and to brotherly Kindness, Charity. Study an uniform Symmetry of all Parts, grow to a suitable Carriage for thy several Occasions, so as when Corruptions are strong, Grace may be able to check them; when thy Burden is heavy, thou may have Patience to bear it; when thy Temptations are violent and strong, thou may be so bold as to resist to Blood. Improve it for inviting and encouraging Strangers, tell them how sweet this hidden Manna is, when the Secrets of Heaven are disclosed to your Souls. Improve it for comforting such as are cast down, pour Wine and Oil into their Wounds, *2 Cor.* 1. 4. Improve it for walking more heavenly and cheerfully, let condemned People go hanging down their Heads, but thou who art absolved, *Rom.* 8. 1. cheer up, *Why art thou, being the King's Son, lean from Day to Day*; *2 Sam.* 13. 4. were thou never so Poor, thou has God's Bond for thy daily Bread. And improve covenanted Grace, so as to perform Duties in a spiritual Manner, this will render them acceptable in the Eyes of a holy God. 3ly, Hold on to the End, persevere and continue, so ye shall be saved, he that signs the Covenant, puts his Hand to Christ's Plowgh, if he look back again, he is not fit for the Kingdom of God. To

move

move you to this, consider, 1. The Advantage of being constant and faithful in God's Covenant, it is your Honour, *Rev. 2. 10. Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life*; it is the way to gain a Crown, it secures your own Peace and Comfort, *Gal. 6. 16. it procures the greatest Safety, He that walks uprightly walks surely*; sinning to thine suffering, is to sink the Ship to prevent a Storm. It is to the Honour of God, it encourages Strangers to embrace Religion, strengthens weak Saints, is a solid Proof of your own Sincerity, and in End shall bring you to Glory, *for he who endures to the end shall be saved*. 2ly, Consider the Hazard of Apostacy and dealing falsely in God's Covenant; it is the greatest Affront can be put on God, for a Man, the one Day to cry, *Nail mine Ears to the Posts of thy Doors, thy Servant I will be for ever*, and the next Day to say with Peter, *I know not the Man*, this is to slight him with a Witness. This Sin argues great Unsoundness and Hypocrisy yet latent in the Heart, it makes you lose the Comfort and Advantage of all ye have already done and suffered for Christ, *Ezek. 18. 24. Ye lose that Honour and Reputation that attends Constancy in God's Covenant, ye become like the changling Demas who forsook Christ for the love of the World, 2 Tim. 4. 10. It makes you lose the Gifts and Parts, and that Expediency for God's Service ye once had, his Spirit in its wonted Operations and Influences withdraws from them, so as they are not the Men they once were, Math. 25. 28, 29. Take therefore the Talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten Talents. — From him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath*. You will lose a tender Conscience, the necessary Companion of a gracious Soul, and if ye finally Apostatise, eternal Glory is also lost. Direction 4th. To you who are in Covenant with God, walk worthy of your Dignity, is it a light thing for you to be Sons of a King? This is not the Privilege of Angels, it is not the Privilege of many rich flourishing Nations to be in Covenant with God as Scotland is: Therefore walk worthy of the Love of God manifested in the Covenant; walk worthy of your Hopes, worthy of the Privileges God has bestowed on you, and of the Means he has provided for conveying these unto you.

The next thing in the Words is the most signal Instance wherein Jesus executed his Office of Mediation on Earth, by shedding his Blood for Confirmation of that Covenant whereof he was Mediator. Hence arises

Observation 3. *That the Blood of Sprinkling, or the cleansing Blood of Christ comes with better, greater and sweeter News to Sinners, than the Blood of Abel had.*

Before I come to the Use of this Point, I shall, 1. Speak of the sprinkling and cleansing Efficacy of this Blood, and next of its speaking Vertue.

As to the First, Christ's Blood has a sprinkling, cleansing Efficacy, *1 John 1. 7. The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin*. On this Head I shall shew, 1. What this sprinkling is, 2. How it does sprinkle or cleanse. 3. Prove that it cleanseth all Believers from all Sin. 4. Whence it has this Efficacy.

To explain what this Sprinkling is, consider, 1. There is a ceremonial typical Sprinkling, *Ezek. 12. 22. Chap. 24. 6. Lev. 16. 14.* which did express the expiating, purging cleansing Efficacy of the Blood of Christ as applied to Believers, of which all the Sacrifices under the Law were Types and dark Shadows. 2ly, There is a real spiritual Cleansing when the Soul's Filthiness is taken away; concerning this, we must distinguish, 1. Betwixt the Guilt of Sin and the Filth of it, the Guilt is cleansed in Justification; Believers being delivered from the Wrath of God and the condemnatory Sentence of the Law, *Rom. 5. 1. Chap. 8. 1. The Filth of Sin is gradually cleansed*.

it is begun in Regeneration, and advanced in a Work of Sanctification and Holiness; both are ascribed to Christ, 1 Cor. 1. 30. 2ly, This Cleansing is twofold, either as it is meritoriously purchased on the Cross, Rom. 3. 25. or as it is effectually applied by him, as a Prince exalted to give Repentance and Remission of Sins, Acts 5. 31. And there be two Steps of this, one in our Lord's Intercession, that we may be cleansed, Heb. 9. 12. The other in pronouncing the Man clean; the Spirit of God hath a gracious Work upon the Spirits of his People, so as Conscience is made to bear Witness to the Reality of their Abolution, and begun Sanctification, Heb. 9. 14. saying, Thou art clean, poor Sinner, I made thee beautiful through my Comeliness put upon thee.

Secondly, I am to shew how this Blood doth cleanse; and 1. It cleanseth meritoriously, he merited the Pardon of Sin, Eph. 1. 7. We have Redemption through his Blood, the forgiveness of Sins. He merited the Imputation of his Righteousness, that glorious Garment that covers all the Believers Faults is dipped in our Redeemer's Blood, Rom. 3. 25. and he merited the gracious Inhabitation of his Spirit in his People, with all the Graces of Faith, Love, Hope, Patience, Self-denial, and new Obedience. 2ly, He cleanseth as our great Advocate, 1 John 2. 1. If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: He prays that we may be sanctified, John 17. 17. By his own Blood he entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us, Heb. 9. 12. 3ly, This Blood cleanseth perfectly, no Stain is left, all Sin is done away; but mistake it not, it cleanseth not perfectly from the Being of Sin, while in this World the best of Saints oft cry out of a Body of Death, Rom. 7. 24. Neither from the Sense of Sin; the more Sense, the better with them that have it; when ye find your Enemy active and stirring, it will put you on your Guard to oppose him; But it cleanseth perfectly so as there is no Condemnation for Sin, in this Ocean shall the Believer swim safely to Heaven, Rom. 8. 1. And the Day is coming, when the Believer shall be cleansed Perfectly, even as to Sin's Being and Indwelling, when they shall be Holy, as he is Holy, and their vile Bodies made like his glorious Body. 4ly, It cleanseth only, neither Ordinances, nor Sacraments, nor Prayers, nor any other Mean or Duty will cleanse the Soul from Sin; but only the Blood of Christ applied by Faith. 5ly, It cleanseth universally, all the Faculties of the Soul, and all the Members of the Body are vile and loathsome, but if dirt here they will be clean. 6ly, It purifies infallibly and efficaciously; all that the Wicked on Earth, or the Devils in Hell can do, shall not mar its Energy.

Thirdly, I am to prove that this Blood will certainly cleanse; I fear, says one, All the Blood of Christ will not cleanse me: Yes, it will cleanse, and I shall make it evident by these few Considerations, 1. The cleansing Efficacy of his Blood was represented by all the glorious Types of the Old Testament. 2ly, This is foretold as the Effect of his Blood by the ancient Prophets, Zech. 13. 1. In that Day there shall be a Fountain opened to the House of David, and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, for Sin, and for Uncleaness. 3ly, All the Saints of the Old Testament have made use of this Blood for their cleansing, and it was to them effectual, Psal. 51. 7. Purge me with Hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than the Snow. 4ly, The New Testament also expressly declares this; the poor Woman, Math. 9. 20. says, If I may but touch the hem of his Garment, I shall be whole: The poor Man who had lyen long at the Pool, John 5. was healed by a Word: Why? The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sin, 1 John 1. 7. 5ly, There is no other End why it was shed, but to make an end of Sins, to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness, Dan. 9. 24.

6ly, This

oly, This is also the End why he is gone to Heaven to interced for the Application of this Blood, and to make it effectual for cleansing his Elect People, Heb. 9. 12.

Fourthly, I am to enquire whence has this Blood this Efficacy. *Answer* 1. From the Constitution and Contrivance of the glorious Covenant of Redemption, it was so ordered betwixt the Father and the Son, Isa. 53. 10, 11. *Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his Soul an offering for Sin, he shall see his Seed, he shall prolong his Days, and the Pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his Hand. He shall see of the Travail of his Soul, and shall be satisfied: by his Knowledge shall my righteous Servants justify many, for he shall bear their Iniquities.* 2ly, From the Quality of the Person dying, Jesus Christ the Son of God, equal with the Father; so his Blood was infinite in Value and Efficacy: 3ly, From our Lord's Union with, and Relation to Believers, betwixt him and them there is a natural Union, *Forasmuch then as the Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same*, Heb. 2. 14: *He is Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh.* There is a legal Union betwixt us, he has a Relation in Law to Believers as our Sponsor, Surety and Cautioner; so that by what he did he acquits the Debtors. And there is a mystical Union betwixt Christ and us, as he is the Head, they are the Members; he the Husband, they his Spouse, he will make them Partakers of his Purchase, and in End Sharers of his Glory. 4ly, From his being Mediator, the Excellency of his Office gives great Value to his Blood, an Office too high for Seraphims in Heaven, he was willing to shed his Blood, that we may go free. 5ly, From the blessed Qualities in this Blood which enhance its Value, it is the highest Act of Love, the furthest that free Grace could go; it is an Act of most stupenduous Obedience to a non-such wonderful Love, *He became obedient, even to the Death*, he did swim through a Sea of God's Wrath. It is a voluntary Act, John 10. 18. he says, *I lay down my Life, no Man taketh it from me, Alay it down of my self, I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it again; and it is the Blood of the immaculat Lamb of God, of an holy innocent Person, who was harmless, undefiled and separate from Sinners.*

In the second Place, As this is the Blood of Sprinkling, so it is speaking, *It speaketh better things than that of Abel.* And here consider, *First*, To whom it speaks. 1. To God, in that glorious Transaction betwixt the Father and him in the Covenant of Redemption. We may conceive our Redeemer speaking thus, *I am grieved for that fearful Rupture betwixt thee and Adam thy reasonable Creature; I offer my self to mediate betwixt thee and them, to compose Differences, and make up a lasting Peace, to thy Honour, and their unspeakable Good; I will repair the Injury done to provoked Justice, by cheerful taking on Man's Nature, and in that Nature suffering Death and shedding of Blood; I will underly divine Wrath and Displeasure, and satisfy all that Justice can demand: Thy tender Bowels of Love to, and Compassion for Sinners yearns so, as I will step in betwixt them and all Hazard.* 2ly, It speaks to Sinners, *What will ye do, O Sinners, there is an eternal Curse gone out against you? There is no Help, no Hope for you in your present State; yet beware of sinking in Despondency, I will go in betwixt Justice and you to prevent your Ruin; I will take the burden of your Sins, and my Father's Anger for them, and bear them in my own Body on the Tree, at thereby I will satisfy Justice, so I will save you, by imputing to you my Righteousness: Only ye must by Faith resign your selves up to me, as being no more your own, but my dear bought Purchase, at the Expence of my Blood; and ye must live a Life of Faith, spending on me as your Stock, as I am made unto you Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.* 2ly, Con;

Hebrews XII. Verse 24.

385

24. Consider how this Blood speaks; and 1. As it was shed here on the Cross, it speaks that the Work of our Redemption is finished, *John 19. 30. When Jesus had received the Vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghost.* His bloody Death tells that Victory over Sin, Satan, Hell, Death and the Grave is now obtained, that the Justice of God is now satisfied, and the Sinner that embraces his Merits, that flies to the Horns of this Altar shall never enter into Condemnation. It speaks not by terrible Thunderings, *Fire, Blackness and Darkness*, as the Law at Mount Sinai, striking Terror on the Beholders; nor as *Abel's Blood* that cried for Vengeance on the Murderer, so as he was at the Brink of Despair, afraid that every Body that met him should kill him: But this Blood of Christ cries for Peace, Pardon and Indemnity to the Believer, be his Sins never so great; it speaks that the Covenant is sealed by the Blood of the Testator, it is now unalterable, the Legacies and Inheritance bequeathed on Believers who are Christ's Heirs, shall surely be conveyed to them, it is not in the Power of Hell or Earth to deprive you of it. Here is good News, the best ever the World heard, yea News will make Heaven sound with the Praises of the Lamb that was slain, and redeemed us by his Blood. 25. This Blood speaks as it is presented in Heaven by Christ's Intercession, *Heb. 9. 12, 24.* His Blood is a moving Plea on the Elect's Account, for the Application of his whole Purchase to these for whom it was designed. We may conceive it thus, *Here, says our Lord, are some Men and Women who were given to me to be redeemed, for whom I have payed a dear Price, let them be converted and called, and brought within the Bosom of the true Church: Here are others, who according to the Terms of the Covenant have embraced my Merits by true and lively Faith; let their Prayers be heard, their Persons accepted; let them be preserved from Evil, sanctified by the Spirit of Grace, have Union and Communion with God, and among themselves; yea I will that they persevere in Grace, and in End be crowned with Glory, that they be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, John 17. 6, 24. My Name is in them, my Honour is concerned for them, none of them shall perish.* Thus his Blood speaks better things than that of *Abel*: this moving Plea in his Intercession is always effectual, *The Father hears him always, John 11. 42.* 26. His Blood speaks in the Sacraments, particularly in that of the Supper, which is the New Testament in Christ's Blood shed for many, for the Remission of Sins, *Matth. 26. 28.* Here his Blood tells you as sure as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, so sure shall ye who are believing Communicants share of Christ and all his Purchase of Grace here, and of Glory hereafter: This is a Staff to guide you through the Wilderness to the Land of Promise, it is a Foretaste and Prelibation of Communion in Glory. 27. This Blood speaks as it is preached and declared in the Gospel. How oft are ye invited to accept of the Merits of Christ, and certified ye will be inexcusable if ye refuse? The Promises flow all as Streams from this Fountain, *2 Cor. 1. 20.* All the Blessings, Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal are purchased by his Death, *Gal. 3. 14.* If ye accept of the Merits of his Blood, here is the best of News, Pardon for guilty Criminals, Indemnity for Rebels, Payment of all the Debt ye owe to offended Justice, Reconciliation for Enemies, Cure to the Sick, Comfort to the Distressed, Sight to the Blind, Raiment to the Naked, Riches to the Poor, Strength to the Weak. These are News of your particular Concern, sweet and satisfying, great and unspeakable, sutable and seasonable, this may dilate your Souls to the highest Pitch of Heavenly Joy. 28. This Blood speaks for Admission into Heaven for all Believers at Death, and at the great Day: There is a flaming Sword of Justice set to seclude all from entering into Paradise, but such as have accepted the Merits of Christ's Blood; this opens the Door, removes

removes the Impediments, *Heb. 10. 19, 20.* These Saints, says our Lord, have glorified me on Earth, have accepted me, when others have rejected the Offer. Come ye blessed of the Lord, enter into the Kingdom purchased and prepared for you by this Invaluable Price. There ye shall sing with all the Saints the Praises of the unspeakable Virtue and Efficacy of this Blood, whereby ye are redeemed out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation, and made Kings, and Priests unto our God, *Rev. 5. 9, 10.*

Use 1. Of Information. Great is the Love of God to Sinners, that ever provided such a Fountain to sprinkle and cleanse us: Invaluable is the Value of this Blood of our only Mediator, who shed his Blood for us on Earth, and now it speaks as a moving Plea in Heaven for the Application of his Purchase to all for whom it was designed.

Use 2. Of Reproof. 1. To such who reject and despise this Blood: Say they, I will Pray, Read, Hear, Meditate and Perform other Duties, will not these cleanse me from Sin, and bring me to Heaven? Nay, many who have done these external Acts of Duty, have landed in the bottomless Pit, these can never satisfy the infinite offended Justice of God; if thou accept not of Christ, thou wilt be reckoned a Despoiler of the Contrivance of infinite Grace and Wisdom for Redemption of Sinners, thou wilt never enter the Gates of the new Jerusalem above, but shalt be shut down to endless Misery. 2^d, To such who mix other things with Christ's Blood, expecting partly to be saved by it, and partly by their own Duties: Christ's Blood alone is sufficient to purchase Salvation, nothing can be added or set on a Parallel Foot with what is infinite in Value; and such who will not venture their Souls on him alone, shall have none of him. 3^d, This Doctrine also reproves the poor desponding discouraged Soul, who says, My Sins cannot be cleansed; but let me tell thee, this Blood speaks better things than that of Abel; it cleanseth from all Sin, 1 John 1. 7. This Blood cleansed a Blood-shedding Manasseh, a persecuting Paul, and a vast Number of once Heathenish-Sinners, and can it not cleanse thee? Why should thou thus reproach it? How darest thou do it? Accept but of Christ's Purchase, and in due time thou shalt win to Praise the infinite Invaluable Efficacy of his Blood for ever and ever.

Use 3. Of Exhortation. 1. Bless God for this Blood of Sprinkling; how can ye think to sing the Song of the Redeemed above, if ye take no Pleasure in it in this World? 2^d, I invite, call and beseech you all to come to this Fountain, wash and be clean; the Lord is yet on a Throne of Grace willing to welcome you, this is the Door by which ye must enter into Glory, it is a Privilege denied to many greater Nations than this, they have no such Calls; if ye refuse, ye will be guilty of dishonouring God, of ruining your own Souls, and of provoking God to take away the Gospel from you, and give it to a Nation that will bring forth the Fruits thereof: But if ye hearken to this Call, you will glorify our Lord, and secure your own eternal Happiness. 3^d, As for you who are cleansed by this Blood, I have a few things to speak to you, as 1. See ye be very humble and tender in your Walk, ye have need to go softly all the Days of your Life, and especially to keep your Hearts with all Diligence, having a constant watchful Eye lest your spiritual Adversaries prevail against you. 2^d, See ye never allow your selves in Neglect of any known Duty, or Commission of any known Sin. 3^d, Have frequent Recourse to this Fountain for daily cleansing from all Filthiness, that ye may perfect Holiness in the fear of the Lord, and especially when ye are to go about the Performance of solemn Duties to God, I will wash mine Hands in Innocency, so will I compass mine Altar, *Psal.*

Plal. 26. 6. After ye have been about solemn Duties, there is much Imperfection and Impurity cleaves to them, which should make you again to have Recourse to the Blood of Sprinkling. When ensnared by any Sin, cry, *Purge me with Hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than the Snow, Plal. 51. 6.* And when Conscience flies in your Face, raking up former Guilt, do not stifle the Conviction, but take with the Charge, and betake to the Blood of Sprinkling, to purge your Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God. *4ly*, Since Christ's Blood is a moving Plea in Heaven for Application of his Purchase to his People, make frequent Use of Christ's Intercession, daily imploy him; and if you would do this successfully, ye must have a Sense of Sin on your Spirit, that your Prayers are mixed with Sin, and can never be heard unless presented as perfumed with the Incense of our Redeemer's Merits, come to God with greater Boldness, that there is a way consecrate to enter into the Holiest through the Vail of Christ's Incarnation, wait and plead with God for hearing your Requests for your self and the Church upon Christ's Account, and if you obtain Hearing and Acceptance, impute it not to your own Duties, but to our Lord's Intercession. This is the way to prevent much Sin, and to make Duties successful, easie and pleasant. *5ly*, Frequently renew your Covenant Engagements with the Lord, by Dedication of your selves to him, and accepting of his Merit and Purchase for Salvation; this will make the Sense of your Obligations to him, and of your Duties in Correspondence thereunto fresh upon your Spirits, especially when Occasion offers, to remember his Death in the Sacrament, carefully improve the same; let Repentance, Faith, Love and Hope be in Exercise. Round all your Expectations of being admitted to Glory on this, Christ has merited it for you, which ye have accepted by Faith.

Use 4. Of Trial. If ye be yet cleansed by this Blood of Sprinkling, but take this Caution with you, that none are so cleansed as to be perfectly freed from indwelling Sin while in this World, tho' they be free from the Guilt of it, *Rom. 8. 1.* and from its Power and Dominion, *Rom. 6. 14.* yet there are Remains of a Body of Sin and Death in the flesh, but try if ye be cleansed by these. *1.* If so, then the first way ye run for Pardon is to this Fountain; some when Conscience challenges them they run to Duties, and rest there, but come not to this Blood, look not to the Brazen Serpent; but the Believer will still look to what speaks better things than the Blood of Abel. *2ly*, Thou wilt have a high Value and Esteem of it, *1 Pet. 2. 7.* To them which believe Christ is precious. Thou wilt count the best of things when laid in the Ballance with him but as Dust and Dung, thou wilt not count thy Life too good to part with for his Cause; thou wilt look on all earthly things not to be compared with the Sweetness of one Hours Communion with him. *3ly*, Thou wilt hate and lothe Sin more than ever, yea the very Garments spotted with the Flesh, crying, *What have I to do any more with Idols? If I have done Iniquity, I will do so no more, what I know not teach thou me.* That which killed Christ will never be allowed to live in thee. *4ly*, It will be thy daily Care to keep near this Blood of Sprinkling, and make frequent Use of it for cleansing. *5ly*, Thou wilt be prepared and fitted to do God Service, *2 Tim. 2. 21.* Sanctified and meet for the Masters Use, and prepared for every good Work.

Use 5. Of Comfort to poor broken Sinners. here is Blood to cleanse you from all Sin, ye who are groaning under its Burden; if thou say, So vile a Creature as I can take no Comfort in this? *Answer*, Suppose thee as ill as thou can imagine thy self, should that put thee away from Christ? Where thinks thou to go next? If Vileness had hindered Christ from washing and cleansing a Sinner, there had never been one washed.

washen in this World, for we are all as an unclean thing. But the more vile thou be in thine own Eyes, the more welcome shall thou be to Christ's Blood. He came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance; take home then these Promises for thy Encouragement, *Isa. 1. 18. Chap. 55. 7. Ezek. 36. 27. 1 John 1. 7.* And be perswaded there is none that comes to Christ in so bad a Case, but there is some Comfort to them in that Blood that speaks better things than the Blood of Abel.

HEBREWS XII. Verse 25.

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven.

Nota, The following Sermon on this Text was preached before the PARLIAMENT, Jan. 20. 1703.

THE general Nature of this Epistle, as to the Kind and Style of writing is *Parentetical* or *Horatory*; and the Exhortation proponed and enforced is *Constancy* and *Perseverance* in the Faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Profession of the Gospel, against Temptations and Persecutions; both these the *Hebrews* had to conflict with from the *Judicial Church State*, and *Mosaic Ordinances*, which they were called to relinquish by the Gospel. The divine Institution of their State, with its Worship, the Solemnity of the Covenant whereon it was established, the Glory of its Priesthood, Sacrifices, and other divine Ordinances were continually pressed to allure and draw them off from the Gospel; and this gave Occasion to the whole doctrinal Part of the Epistle. After he has fixed their Minds in the Truth, and armed them against the foresaid Temptations, he comes next to perswade and urge their Perseverance under the many Persecutions from the obstinate Members of the *Jewish Church*; in Order to which, he shews the only Way and Mean on their Part whereby they may persevere and keep constant in their Profession, is Faith alone. For which End in the preceding Chapter he enlarges in the describing the Nature of it, shewing its Aptitude and Fitness to the reaching and effecting this great End for which it is assigned, namely their Perseverance, with a Variety of Instances confirmatory thereof.

This Chapter contains an Application of the Doctrine confirmed in the preceding to the practical Use of the *Hebrews*. Doctrine and Use was the Apostles Method, and must, at least *Virtually*, be theirs also who regard either Sense, Reason, or Experience in their Preaching. In order to this End we have, *First*, An Use of Exhortation pressing home the Duty of Perseverance, from the Testimonies before insisted on, with new additional Motives and Encouragements to Verse twelfth. *Secondly*, An Use of Direction to special Duties necessary to a due Compliance with the general Exhortation, and subse-

vient

vient to its compleat Observance, from Verse twelfth to Verse eighteenth. *Thirdly*, From Verse eighteenth to my Text the former Duty is again enforced by Arguments drawn from another general Topick; Namely, The Splendor and Glory of a Gospel State which now they were under, far transcending the State of the Jewish Church under the Legal OEconomy, together with a Variety of dignifying Privileges wherewith they were Invested; The Consideration whereof should oblige them to Constancy and Perseverance: And from all,

In the Words of my Text he infers a solemn, great and weighty Charge unto these Hebrews, which is now equally of our Concern as it was theirs then, these things being written for our Instruction, *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh*; In which we have, 1. A great hainous Gospel-sin dehorted from, *Refuse not him that speaketh*. 2. The Solemnity of the Charge added to the Dehortation, *See that ye refuse not* — Take heed, beware, ye will rush your selves on a Complication of inevitable Dangers, if ye be not on your Guard. 3. The Enforcement of this taken from the Consideration of the Person with whom they had to do in this Matter, with a Comparison betwixt the Event of the Neglect of this Duty in them, and a Neglect of the same Duty for kind in them unto whom the Law was given; *If they escaped not, much more shall not we escape*. — 4. The Inference from the Comparison is exprest in the conjunctive Particles, *for, if*. Consider with your selves (says the Apostle) how it was with them under the Old Testament on their Disobedience, and how much more hainously aggregated that Sin is now in us under the Gospel than it was with them, *If they escaped not, how much more shall not we*, being guilty of the same Sin, *not escape*. I shall shortly run through the Words by way of Explication, *First*, The Caution and Charge given is in the word *saith*, which originally is a word of Sense, to see with our Eyes, and so it is commonly used in the New Testament, except when in the Imperative, as it is in the Text, and then it signifies, *To take heed, to be on our Guard, careful and concerned about what is given in charge*, Matth. 24. 4. *Take heed that no Man deceive you*, Mark 13. 33. *Take ye heed, watch and pray*. And in this word as it lies in my Text, both the Weight of the Duty, and the Danger of its Neglect is included. 2. As to the Subject Matter given in the Charge, which is *not to refuse him that speaketh*, not to despise nor turn away from him, this necessarily supposeth the Injunction of the Duty here intended, and that is, *The hearing of him that speaketh*, and that such a Hearing as the Scripture intends, where-ever it speaks of our Duty; Namely, so to hear as to believe, and yield Obedience to what is heard. 3. The Object on which this Duty supposed terminates, *him that speaketh*, which at this time he continued to do by some of the Apostles, in an extraordinary Manner, accompanying them by Signs, Wonders and mighty Works; and to this Day continues by his Spirit to accompany the Dispensation of the Gospel, speaking to us by his sent Servants, who come forth in his Name, and by his Authority. And this Command has special Respect to a double solemn Charge given by God unto his Church: The *First*, At clo- sing of the Law: And the *Second*, At the beginning of the Gospel. The *First*, Given to prepare the Church for her Duty in its proper Season, is recorded *Deut. 18. 18, 19. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him*. Which Text is applied to the Lord Jesus, *Acts 3. 22, 23. Chap. 7. 37*. This the Apostle now minds them of. Take heed that ye hear him, for if not, God will require it of you in your Destruction. The second Charge to the same purpose was given

given immediately from Heaven at the Foundation of the Gospel. *John 1. 1. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.* This Voice out of the Cloud came from the Apostle Peter tells us from the excellent Glory, the Person of the Father.

To clear this Text a little further, a few Questions may be briefly considered. 1. Who it is who spoke on Earth? *Answer*, Some Interpreters understand it of Moses, and that that Exposition, for in giving the Law Moses was not a *mediator*. He that spoke *Moses*, but cheerfully chose him for a Mediator betwixt God and them, cheerfully promising to hear him, *Exod. Chap. 20. Deut. Chap. 5.* The original word *שמעתי* in the Scripture is applied to God alone, tho' he may use the Ministry of Angels therein, *Hebr. 11. 7. And he that spoke on Earth, his voice then shook the Earth,* verse 26. which was not the Voice of Moses, no, he that gave these divine Oracles, was none else but the Son of God himself. 2. It may be enquired, How did the People refuse him? *Answer*, By refusing Obedience to him that gave the Law, which did fall out in their making the Golden Calf, while Moses was in Mount Sinai, *Exod. Chap. 32.* and by several other Rebellions of that People following thereupon. 3. How did they not escape on their so Sinning? *Answer*, They did not escape divine Wrath and Vengeance, which did speedily overtake them, for three thousand of them were slain by the Sword for their Sin, in the Matter of the Golden Calf. And the Lord has put it on Record. — *In the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. And the Lord plagued the people.* *Exod. 32. 34. 35.* And we have many Instances of divine Indignation that did overtake this People for their Sin, *1 Cor. 10. 5.* — 11. The Words being thus explained, I resolve them into this complex doctrinal Proposition, which will exhaust the Scope of the whole.

Observe, That it ought to be the Up-taking and Soul-exercising Concern of all that live under the Drop of this Gospel, that they refuse not Christ in his Offer, there speaking to them; it being a Sin God will surely punish with divine Indignation.

I shall explain this complex Proposition in its several Branches, and then shall apply the whole: It includes these following Observes.

Observe 1. That our Lord Jesus Christ cheerfully and readily makes Offer of himself to vile Sinners; that will but hearken thereto, and not refuse the same. This is his Errand to bespeak and gain them by large, free and full Offers made by himself and his Ambassadors in his Name. *Refuse not him that speaketh.*

Observe 2. That such who refuse and reject his kind Love-offers, put themselves under present and immediate Sentence of divine Vengeance and Indignation. They shall not escape, *Hebr. 2. 3.*

Observe 3. That the greater and clearer the Light is, under which the Impenitent, Irregenerate and Strangers to God do live in this World, by so much the more heaver and greater will their Condemnation and Destruction be, both here, and hereafter, *Matth. 11. 21.* — 25. *Freemans to the First.*

Observe, That our Lord Jesus cheerfully makes Offer of himself to vile Sinners: He comes as a Love-suit to win and engage them; he speaks them fair, and is loath to be denied: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. As he is in Earnest in bespeaking us, so he would have us in Earnest in hearing him. This is his Errand in the Gospel.

I shall, *First*, Prove the Truth of this Doctrine. *Secondly*, Shew how he speaks home to Sinners. *Thirdly*, What Entertainment he expects of us.

For Proof of this Doctrine, That he cheerfully offers himself to us, and earnestly bespeaks us to comply with and accept of his Offers in this Gospel. Nothing more evident, if we consider, 1. That from Eternity the Longings and Desires of his Heart were set on the Children of Men, *Prov. 8. 31. Rejoicing in the habitable Parts of the Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men.* 2. When the Fullness of time was come, passing by a Superior and more excellent Nature, *He took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham.* Behold Vessels of Gold cast into the Fire of Destruction, and earthen Potheards fitted for Glory! He marries our Nature to himself, and that even after Sin had blasted its Beauty, and let in so many direful Calamities upon it, *Rom. 8. 3. He was found in the likeness of sinful flesh.* That is, Flesh subject to Weariness, Pains and Death, which tho' there be no Sin in them, yet are the Effects and Consequences of it: And all this he did to make way for winning Sinners Hearts to comply with his Love-offers. 3. It was the Scope of the whole of his Doctrine while in the Flesh to court and woo Sinners; how pathetically he spoke as never Man spoke, when ever he opened his Lips Heaven opened; the very Heart of God was opened in it to Sinners, *Matth. 11. 28. John 7. 37. Luke 12. 34.* 4. He express still Joy for the Success of the Gospel, *Luke 10. 17, 21.* When the Disciples returned and reported, *Even the Devils are subject to us through thy Name, in that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit.* 5. He was grieved at Sinners refusing his Offers, *Mark 3. 5. He looked round about them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* With what Tears of tender Sorrow does he reject Jerusalem for rejecting of him, and foretells it as the Forerunner of all their Misery. 6. What unwearied Labour and Fatigue he undertook Day and Night to reach his Design of gaining Sinners, many weary Journeys, many Sermons he preached, and Prayers he poured out with strong Cries and Tears, and all for this End.

Secondly, I am to shew how he Courts and Bespeaks Sinners, and on this Head consider, 1. He speaks Externally and Ministerially in the Preaching of the Gospel, the Scriptures are his Word, and Ministers his Mouth, *Jer. 15. 19.* He that heareth them heareth Christ: And he speaks Internally and Energetically, which consists not in Sound but in Power. The Former is only the Organ and Instrument for conveying the Latter, and is always Ineffectual and Unsuccessful, till Animated and Influenced by it. 2. How he Speaks. He speaks with Authority and Majesty, *He speaks from Heaven*, says the Text; His Words are deeply Affecting and Impressive, he fully reaches the Heart of Man thereby, *Hos. 2. 14. I will speak comfortably to her.* In the Original, it is, *I will speak to her Heart.* When God shews to Man the Ill of Sin, he so convinces the Soul, that no Creature-comforts have any Pleasure or Sweetness in them, and when he shews to Man Righteousness, Pardon and Peace in himself, he so Comforts and Refresheth the Heart, that it is a sufficient Antidote against the Bitterness of Afflictions, *Psal. 94. 19.* He speaks secretly, his is a small still voice, he gently whispers it into the Soul's Ear, bearing it particularly home from the Ear to the Heart, as *Nathan to David, Thou art the Man.* He speaks Distinctly and Particularly to the State and Case of the Soul, as if by Name, as when he said, *Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me? Acts 9. 4. He calleth his Sheep by name, John 10. 3.* He speaks in a distinguishing Manner, so as the Soul can know a Difference betwixt his Voice and any other, *It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, (says the Spouse) His Sheep follow him, for they know his voice, John 10. 4.* There is a Peculiarity in his Dialect, one word he spake to *Abner*, *John 20. 16.* Rent her

her Cloud of Desolation in twain, and made the Light of Comfort shine into her Soul. Well may it be said of him, as *John 9. 46.* *Never Man spake like this Man.* He speaks Surprisingly, *Isa. 65. 1.* *I am found of them that sought me not.* He surprises his People with a Gift of Grace and Mercy, as he did to *Mathew* and *Saul*. He speaks so as to convince the Conscience of a Sinner, to put a final End to all Shifts and Excuses, and so as his Words shall have abiding Effects on the Soul. Hence 3. Consider these abiding Effects, when he speaks so as to convince the Conscience, it is to make the Soul loath Sin and it, because of Sin, *Rom. 7. 9.* *When the Commandment came, Sin revived and I died:* It makes the Soul to tremble, *Acts 2. 37.* Raises in the Soul holy Care, Fear and Solitude, *What shall I do to be saved?* A convinced Sinner, to whose Heart, Christ has spoke, has three things peculiar in their Case; They have a strong Intention of Mind and Thoughts, they stand Night and Day like a Bow at a full Bend, as pointing on this Matter, many sleepless Sleeps and meatless Meals pass them. They are upon a searching Inquisition how to escape Wrath, *What shall I do to be saved?* And they take little Notice at this time of their outward Tribulation and Afflictions, providing they may secure an Interest in Christ, and a Right to everlasting Salvation. Christ's Voice produces also Encouragement and Hope, putting the Soul on the Use of Means for obtaining eternal Happiness with Expectation of Success, drawing the Soul with the sweet alluring Bonds of Love, and filling it with divine Satisfaction, Peace, Quiet and Rest.

Thirdly, I come now to tell you what Entertainment he who thus Courts and Bespeaks us does expect from and require of us. Now, remember, that as I hinted in the Explication of the Text, that in this Evil here prohibited, the Intention of a Duty is intended; Namely, the hearing, obeying, accepting of, and closing with the Offers of him that speaketh to us from Heaven. Now this is the Entertainment he expects and requires of us, which lies in a word, in the Soul's present, free, full and irrevocable Consent to be his, and for him and not for another: To which three things are requisite, 1. That we heartily consent to be his, that we make a full Surrender of all that we are and have to him, so as ever after we look on our selves not as our own, but bought with a Price, obliged to serve him with our Bodies and Spirits that are his, *1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.* 2. That we leave all our Wants and Needs on him, and derive all your Supplies from him, else your Choice of him is not full, there is a Fond in him for all ye want, and he has made it communicable to you, *1 Cor. 1. 30.* 3. Then is your Consent to, and Choice of Christ intire and full, when ye are ready to deny and part with any thing for his sake, reckoning nothing to be lost to us that goes to his Glory, *Revelat. 12. 11.* Now, it is impossible to bring the Soul to comply with these Terms, till there be a Conviction of Sin and Misery, the Soul crying out, *What shall I do to be saved?* Till there be a Discovery of Christ in all his glorious Perfections, and of our indispensable Need of him, and the inward, perswading, drawing Efficacy of the Spirit of God be communicate to allure the Soul to embrace him.

Observe 2. That such as refuse and reject his kind Love-offers, put themselves under the Weight of divine Vengeance and Indignation, they shall not escape. It shall be as inevitable as its Insupportable, *John 3. 18.* *He that believeth not is condemned already.* verse 36. The wrath of God abides on him.

Method may lead me here to shew First, What the Sin of refusing Christ is. Secondly, What is the Punishment such Refusers shall not escape. Thirdly, That this Punishment unavoidably follows their Sin.

As to the *First*, Refusing of Christ on the Terms of the Gospel, or neglecting to accept of him, is exclusive of these two, Of the saving Act of Faith, which is a Consenting to take him, And of the saving Fruits of Faith, as Love, Joy, Peace of Conscience, Holiness and Heavenly-mindedness.

Secondly, The Punishment such Refusers shall not escape, tho' it be deliver'd in general Terms in the Text, yet ye may see it at large amplified and illustrate in a variety of notable Instances, 1 Cor. 10. 5, — 11: But Particularly, Refusers come under the condemnatory Sentence of the great and terrible God, the Supreme, Fearful and Impartial Judge, they are sentenced to eternal Death, than which nothing more dreadful, a dying Life and a living Death for ever; this is the final Sentence of the great God, from whose Tribunal there is no Appeal, but Execution must inevitably follow Condemnation, *Luke* 19. 27. *Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.*

Thirdly, This Punishment unavoidably follows this Sin of refusing Christ, 1. Because Unbelief shuts you out from all Help; it secludes from Pardon of Sin, *John* 8. 24. *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* It debars from all the saving Fruits of Christ's Purchase, Faith being the only Instrument to apply them, *Rom.* 3. 25. which the Refuser wants: And it excludes from the saving Influence and Efficacy of the Gospel, shutting and bolting the Heart against it: It is a Sin against the Remedy, like a wounded Man who refuses to admit a Chirurgion to Cure, but wilfully Bleeds to Death. 2. Refusal of Christ brings you under the most grievous and heinous Guilt and Misery, it is a Sin reflects the greatest Dishonour on God, 1 *John* 5. 10. *He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son:* It is a Slight and Contempt of Christ and the Work of Redemption, counting it as a weak and foolish Thing, a needless Contrivance: It brings with it the sorest spiritual Judgment that can be inflicted on the Soul of Man in this World, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. *But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.* And it shuts up under all the Threatnings of the Bible, of which that is the Sum, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth not shall be damned.*

Observe 3. The greater and clearer the Light is under which Men live in Unbelief, and refuse Christ that speaks to them, by so much the more heavy will their Judgment be at God's Hand. For in the Text, the Sin, as to the Matter, was the same under the Law then, and under the Gospel now; but it being now a much brighter Light, makes the Sin more Inexcusable, and the Judgment more heavy, *Matth.* 11. 21, — 24.

I shall here adduce some Reasons further to Confirm the Doctrine: And 1. Clearer Light, greatens and aggreys Sin proportionably that is committed under it, because all Light, and especially Gospel-light, is, or should be a great Preservative against Sin, and yet in the Face of it, to venture on Sin, is doubtless a great Aggravation. This has a greater Contempt of God's Authority, than Sinning in Ignorance, they have no Plea to extenuate their Offence, *John* 15. 22. Gospel-light being one of the choicest Gifts of God bestowed on the World, the Abusing of it is the more terrible Evil. It argues a love to Sin as Sin, to naked Sin without any Disguise or Covert, and Conscience is more waisted by it, a Wound in Conscience is like a Blow on the Eye, and nothing wounds it more than Sin against Light. 2. These who refuse Christ under clearer Gospel-light, the heavier will their Judgment be, because God is an impartial and just Judge, *He will render to every man according to his work, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile,* *Rom.* 2. 6, — 9. The heaviest Wrath is proportioned to heaviest Sins,

Revel. 18. 4, 6, 7. Especially to these against Light. A special Part of the Torments of Damned rises from their Consciences, *Mark 9. 44.* *That worm which dieth not, that fire is not quenched,* if Conscience be the Tormenter, such as have Sinned against Light, must have greatest Torments. For the more Knowledge, the more has Conscience been abused in Sinning against it, and O what Work will this make for a tormenting Conscience in Hell! With what Rage and Fury will it avenge it self on thee there, be thou never so Impudent and Stout-hearted now? The more Upbraids will Conscience have to cast up to the tormented Sinner, *Did not I warn thee of the Sin and Danger of such Courses, and yet thou wast obstinate in pursuing them, will hast thou deserved these Flames.* The more Knowledge had, so many fair Opportunities and rich Advantages for Heaven are lost, and so the more intolerable will Hell be to that Man. O how far was I come for Heaven, to be admitted to sit on yonder Throne in Robes of Glory with God, Angels and Saints; my Conscience was once convinced, my Affections melted by the Gospel, the Bargain was almost concluded; But O wretched I stuck at Terms, and so the Treaty broke up to my everlasting Destruction; I could not deny my own Lusts, embrace Christ's Righteousness, and live Holily, and now I must dwell with everlasting Burnings for ever and ever! I come now to the Improvement of the Whole.

Use 1. Hence be informed of the Misery of them that refuse Christ in his Gospel-offers, they despise him in whom is all the Hope, Comfort, and Happiness of Sinners: How miserable must such be? Seing they who refuse Christ have made Satan welcome, they are in his Possession; Christ and he have *divisum imperium*, they divide the World betwixt them, he dwells in their Hearts, *Ephes. 2. 2, 3.* The Devil has as much Possession of the Souls of Refusers of Christ, as he has of the Bodies of these we call *Demoniacs*; yes, the former is much more dangerous than the latter. They are under the Curse of the Law without Redemption, for it is Christ only redeems from it, *Gal. 3. 13.* They are under the Wrath of God without Mercy, Wrath abides on him while he refuses to entertain Christ, *John 3. 36.* They are under the Sentence of Condemnation without Pardon, he that refuses Christ is condemned already, *John 3. 18, 19.* Yea, they are near the Confines of Hell without a Saviour, every Sin is a Step toward Hell, but Refusing Christ lands at Ruin: This is the crowning piece that puts on the Copestone of Misery.

Use 2. Of Trial, Are ye Refusers or Accepters of Christ that speaks to you in this Gospel? *2 Cor. 13. 5.* *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobrates?* Try by these Evidences, 1. If ye have embraced our Lord who speaks by this Gospel; There has been a notable Alteration in you, he sits in the Soul as a Refiner, where Christ comes, *old things pass away, old Lusts, old Hearts, and old Ways, and all things become new,* *2 Cor. 5. 17.* 2. If ye heard him that speaketh, your Eyes have been opened to see Sin in its Vileness, and Christ in his Glory, Sutableness, and the absolute Necessity ye stand in of his Help, *Acts 26. 18.* *2 Cor. 4. 6.* 3. If Christ have gained you by his Courtship in the Gospel, ye have turned out all Courtivals with him, Love to, and Delight in Sin is gone, what Christ said to the Souldiers in the Garden, he says to every Soul that is willing to accept him in the Gospel, *If ye seek me, let these go their way.* Christ cannot come in till Idols be gone, *The wicked must forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, before he turn to the Lord and obtain Pardon,* *Isa. 55. 7.* 4. Ye accept of his Cross, and the Yoke of his Obedience, *Ye are willing to suffer with him, that ye may reign with him.* If ye make any Exception against any of these, ye are Refusers.

Marth

Math. 16. 24. Chap. 17. 29. 5. You are filled with an humble and self-abasing Disposition; all Self-righteousness is given up as Dung and Dross, and Christ's Obedience and Satisfaction to Justice is accepted; on this alone ye depend for Salvation, Phil. 3. 8, 9. Rom. 4. 5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6. Henceforth ye are willing ever to be for him, and never for another, This God is our God for ever, and will be our guide even unto Death: Ye said, Nail mine Ear to the Posts of his Door, for this Adam's Servant will I be for ever.

Use 3. Of Exhortation. See that by no means ye refuse him that speaks to you, but accept of him in the Gospel on his own Terms. This concerns you all who are within these Walls, even such of you whom God has raised to Honour, Splendor and Dignity in the World: I am come, *Right Honourable*, to you, in the Name and Authority of my Lord and Master, to charge it home on your Consciences, that ye refuse not, but accept and close with Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory, who by us discloseth to you the Offers of his Love, and calls you, as ye will answer at the Judgment-Seat of Christ, *That ye refuse him not.* To enforce this, allow me with all Seriousness and Humility, and due Respect to your high and noble Qualities, to lay before you these following Motives, *First*, That without ye do hearken to Christ, all your Honours and Dignities are miserably Soiled and Stained; Sanctification and Honour are inseparably joined together, *1 Thess. 4. 4. Deut. 26. 19. To make thee high above all Nations which he hath made, in Praise, and in Name, and in Honour, and that thou mayest be an holy People unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.* Nothing lifts up a Person or People so High, and makes them to truly Famous and Glorious, as to have God for their God: great swelling Titles without a Title to Christ, are but so many Advantages that Satan has over the Enjoyers of them; Honour without this is but a Wind that blows a Man sooner to Hell. Therefore, as ever ye expect to see the Face of God in Peace, *See that ye refuse not*, but accept of Christ while courting your Souls by this Gospel. *2ly*, Consider what is in Christ, the Offers of whose Love I am pressing on you this Day, and then I am sure you dare not refuse him as most of you now do, *God is in him, 2 Cor. 5. 19. A God-head dwelling in Flesh is a World's Wonder, 1 Tim. 3. 16. Refusing Christ is rejecting of God and his Counsel to your own Ruin: Our Lord has the great Seal of Heaven, John 6. 27. Him hath the Father sealed; he has the Father's Credential-Letters, This is my beloved Son, hear ye him; and yet will ye refuse: The Wisdom of God is in him, and by Refusing ye reflect on it as Folly. The Fulness of the Spirit is in him, John 3. 34. The Righteousness, Love, Compassion, yea, Salvation of God are all in Christ; and yet will ye refuse all these?* *3ly*, Consider to whom and how he offers himself, and then think how ye can refuse; he offers himself, not to fallen Angels, they are *Princes of Darkness to the Judgment of the great Day*; nor to damned Reprobates, *their Treaty of Peace is broke up*, Christ will never give them another Testimony: But he offers himself to you, think, How can ye refuse him? Think how the Devils and Damned, *Turks and Tartars, Heathens and Infidels* upbraid you with an inexcusable and unaccountable Folly, in slighting these Offers, the like which they never had? He offers himself to you freely as the Gift of God to your Souls, *not to Purchase, but only to Receive him, Eph. 1. 1. and deal ungratefully with him, welcome your own Mercy, 2 Cor. 5. 20. We are Ambassadors for Christ, as tho' we beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* *4ly*, Consider the great and Danger there is in refusing him that speaketh, all the Attributes of God do shine in their most bright and irradient

Glory in him, ye put the greatest Slight on them, all that is possible for a Creature to do; Ye frustrate the very Design of the Gospel to your selves, 2 Cor. 6. 1. Ye receive the Grace of God in vain, better had it been for you ye had never come to the World, or never been born, than to continue in this Guilt, for by it ye murder your own Souls, if ye believe not in Christ ye shall die in your Sins, John 8. 24. It is Self and Soul-murder. And Finally, This will aggregate your Damnation above all others that perish in Ignorance of Christ, it will be more tolerable for *Heavens* than you, you will get the hottest Room in Hell. The greatest measures of Wrath are reserved to punish the worst of Sinners, and of all none will be found worse than Refusers of Christ. Therefore let me beseech you all, of whatsoever Rank, flee from the Wrath to come, let me entreat and obtect you by the Love of God, by the Bowels of Mercies in Christ, by the Love ye bear to your own Souls, and as ye would not provoke the Lord to remove the Gospel, and inflict sore Strokes on this Nation for refusing to hearken to his Son, that ye hearken unto the gracious Offers of him that speaks, and cheerfully accept of him as your only Lord, as your *Righteousness and Strength*, and dedicate yourselves to his Service. To this End I shall conclude with

Use 4. Of Direction, First, To all Hearers in general, Endeavour to see and feel your Need of Christ, and then ye will be far from refusing him, but will immediately be willing to quite all the Pleasures of Sin for the Enjoyment of him. Consider that the Spiritual and Immortal Nature of your Souls cannot live on Material Things, but must Out-live all Temporary Enjoyments: O then, what a miserable Condition must they be in, when all these are vanished and gone, if eternal Happiness be not secured! Lend your Ears to the Experience of Saints who have tried the Pleasures of Sin, and tasted the Excellency of Christ: See their Verdict, *Psal. 4. 6, 7.* See that ye receive not Christ for a present Shift, till the Storm or the Rod be laid by, and then no more of him; Alas! it was not Christ but Self-ease they were seeking: Beware of dangerous Delays, and secret Reserves; but be sure to take Christ with all your Heart, and shut up your Treaty with him by a solemn Personal Covenant, cowing with your Lips, and subscribing with your Hands, that ye shall be the Lords, and for his Service for ever.

Next, I address my self to such of this Auditory, whom God hath invested with singular Honours and Dignities, and thereby put it in your Hand to do more eminent Service for him: Allow me, *Most Noble Patriots*, to lay it before you as your necessary Duty, to contribute your Outmost in these your high and honourable Stations, for advancing and promoting the great Design of the Gospel, National Reformation and Practical Godliness in both Church and State; thus ye may evidence your selves not to have refused Christ.

We owne our selves highly obliged to bless God for his Conduct to *Her Majesties High Commissioner*, and the *Honourable Estates of Parliament*, that they have answered the Expectations of all the honest *Well-wishers* of this Church and Nation; and I hope shall go on to Crown what is so happily begun, being on your Guard that nothing escape you, which may have any Tendency to Embroil this *National-Church*, and resolve our beautiful comely Order into Confusion. What Shadow or Ground is there to plead for Toleracion to Dissenters from this *National-Church*? Is not their present Connivance far beyond what their dissenting Brethren in late times enjoyed? We have Reason to bless God there is nothing of a Spirit of Persecution amongst us, which not long ago vented it self with some, to shedding much Innocent Blood in Scaffold and Fields. Our gracious God by our *Noble Patriots* in this *Parliament*, hath sufficiently provided against any such Danger

in time coming, and will yet further see to the Preservation of Peace and Quiet in this *National Church* as now established, and the Advancing of *Reformation* therein, you have *God's Command* and the Pattern of Zealous Rulers for this, *Exra Chap. 5. 1. and 6.*

12.

Believe it, *Right Honourable*, that *Reformation*, if rightly set about, should prove the strongest *Bulwark* for this *Nation*. In order to it, allow me most humbly to offer these few, *First*, Beware of too much Carnal Policy, which shrewds in it self under the fairest Names, yet with blackest Designs; it does with Religion as *Ammon* did with *Tamar*, when served its Turn by it, kicks it out of Doors. *Jeroboam*, to preserve his Kingdom, set up Calves: It is the greatest Policy to save a tottering Church and State, and that is no way done so as by a through *Reformation*. *Secondly*, Take care to have the excellent Laws in favours of *Reformation* put to due, speedy and vigorous Execution, and this be committed to Men of Integrity and Honesty, and not to Men either Immoral, Impious, and Vicious in Practice, or Disaffected both to Church and State. *Thirdly*, Act Zealously in your Sphere for freeing the Church of scandalous, erroneous, Ignorant, or supinely negligent Ministers, who are the greatest Barriers in Way of *Reformation*: I may add of *Trafficking Priests* and *Jesuits*, cast your Eyes through the *Nation*, and see how Clamant the Case of some Places is, through Want of Means of Instruction, where Ignorance makes them a Prey to *Papery*, especially some of the *Highland-Places* of the *Nation*. Were it not worth your While, and necessary for their *Reformation*, to find out a Fund for erection of *Schools* among them, that so they may come to be Instructed and Established in the Grounds of the *Protestant Religion*. *Fourthly*, If ye would have *National Reformation* advanced, then begin with your selves, God would not have *David* build his Temple because he had his Hands in Blood, he had shed the Blood of *Uriah*, How many *Uriahs* have some of this Generation washen their Hands in the Blood of? I warn these, if any such here, that without Repentance, the Wrath of God shall overtake you, ye shall inevitably perish, and never be honoured to be Zealous Reformers, for whatever they may do under the Pretence thereof, they can be reckoned nothing else but Enemies, sowing Tares in all their Consults and Actions. *Fifthly*, Account it your greatest Honour and surest Expedient for entailing a Blessing on your selves and Posterity, zealously to put forth your selves for God, in setting about a *Work of Reformation in Church and State*; be not weary of Christ's Scepter, and living under his Government, believe it is the only Liberty; Subjection to your Lusts is the only Bondage, if ye Honour God he will Honour you, be not Jealous, as if Christ's Government would eclipse your Greatness, Christ's Rule, Dignity and Service, and your Honours are not Incompatible. *Sixthly*, Believe it, that *Reformation* and *Practical Godliness*, is the most effectual Mean for advancing the true Interests of *Courts* and *Country*, and will contribute to unite you in laying both impartially in one Ballance. I hope no honest *Scott* Man dare but say, we owe much to King *William* of glorious Memory, who was so highly Honoured of God to do great Things for this Church and Nation, as also to Her present Majesty, our Protestant Queen, and may firmly and undoubtedly expect that She will lay forth Her self to Regard the Honour and Interest of this Country.

Now, That the great God may bless what is said to enforce on your Consciences this great Study of accepting Christ in his Offers, and of *Reformation* and *Practical Godliness*, let us joyn in addressing the God of Heaven:

H E B R E W S XII. Verse 26.

Whose Voice then shook the Earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake, not the Earth only, but also Heaven.

THIS with the subsequent Verse contains an Illustration of the Enforcement of the Exhortation in the foregoing: And it is taken, *First*, From the mighty Power of the Person from whom they would turn away by Unbelief, instanced in what he had done of old, *Whose Voice once shook the Earth.* The thing spoke of is the Voice of Jesus Christ the Author of the Gospel, who speaks from Heaven, whose Voice is of great Power, *Psal. 29. 3.* — 2. The Time when he puts forth this Power, is in the Text *Then*, even at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, where was a great Commotion before described *verses 18, 19, 20, 21.* And this is an illustrious Evidence of the divine Nature of the Law-giver, which should oblige us to hearken to his Voice. *Secondly*, The same Duty is further pressed from what this mighty Power would yet effect, but now hath he promised, saying, *Yet once more I shake not the Earth only, but also the Heaven.* The Words are taken from *Haggai, Chap. 2. v. 6, 7.* The same Thing and Time is described by the Prophet, and the Apostle, and I conceive, it has Respect chiefly to the first coming of Christ and the Promulgation of the Gospel thereon: It may also relate to the second coming of Christ, at the Judgment of the great Day, when the whole Fabrick of Heaven and Earth shall be shaken and removed; but the Comparison in this Context being institute betwixt the State under the Law, and that under the Gospel, wherein the latter has the Preheminence, it relates principally to his first coming, and indeed by it were mighty Shakings and Commotions in the World, Alterations and Changes, such as had not been before observed, as shall be afterward declared, yet all these are a Fruit of the Promise, and by them the Lord brings good to his Church. *Thirdly*, This Duty of hearkning to Christ's Voice is further enforced from the Nature, Excellency and Continuance of these things introduced by the Gospel, in Verse 27. of which in its proper Place. From this Text so explained,

Observe, In general, *That the Church and People of God in this their Militant-State, be subject to sad and sore Shakings.*

From the Words more particularly considered, with respect to the Scope.

Observe 1. *That it is most difficult to excite and stir up the Heavens of this Gospel to accept of Christ in his gracious Offers.* Therefore does the Apostle enforce this Duty by so many Arguments. Our Lord is more terrible than on Mount Sinai, *Do not refuse him.*

Observe 2. *That it was Christ who gave the Law then, as well as now, the Offers of himself in the Gospel.*

Observe 3. *How great soever the Shakings at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai were, yet the Shakings, Alterations, and Changes in the World, by Christ's coming in the Days of the Gospel, and at the great Day, are far more illustrious and Remarkable.*

Observe 4.

Observe *4.* That all Kind of Shakings of the World that can be, are by Way of Promise to the People of God. Says the Text, *Now he hath promised.*

I return to what I observed in General, from the Words,

That the Church and People of God in their Militant-State, be subject to sad and sore Shakings.

To prepare this for our Use, I shall, *First*, Shew some special Shaking-Times to the People of God. *Secondly*, What kind of Shakings these are. *Thirdly*, Why the Lord deals so with his own.

As to the *First*, The People of God may meet with many sore Shaking-Times in this their Militant-State; As 1. A Time of Persecution, *John 16. 2, 3.* They shall put you out of the Synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. 2. A Time of abounding Error when it spreads, and many are defiled thereby, the Promoters of it go through Sea and Land to make Proselytes. 3. When the Devil is let loose by his Tentications, which he suits to Peoples Necessities; after Christ had fasted forty days and forty nights, he tempted him to command stones to be made bread, Satan also suits Suggestions to their Inclinations, which he acquaints himself with; Yea, he is so impudent as to burl the Bait with the Covert of a misapplied Scripture-Phrase, as when he tempted Christ. 4. A Time of sad Dispensations, as when Trouble reaches not only their Bodies, but also their Souls, *The terrors of the Almighty set themselves in array against holy Job*; when they not only have the Trial of the Cross, but of the hidings of God's Face, *Psal. 13. 1, 2.* When after they have got some comfortable Views of God's Presence in Ordinances, they are again brought so low, as they can have no comfortable Evidence either of his Assistance or Acceptance of them: And when Enemies seem to be countenanced, and all that they do prosper, *Psal. 73. 3.* Whereas the Lords own People have Waters of a full Cup poured out to them. I come

Secondly, To shew what kind of Shakings these are: And 1. Such as Communion Attainments and Supports will not preserve you from breaking in Pieces; No, ye must have something more, even special Grace. 2. Such as former Resolutions and Experiences will not serve you, except they be renewed and confirmed; Notwithstanding of old Light, ye may mistake God's Way in dark shaking-times, if ye want present Influences and the unerring Conduct of the Spirit of Grace. 3. So shaking may the Time be, that even these Truths that are most precious and Soul concerning, may be called in Question, the Disciples when our Lord was not compleat three Days dead, began to doubt of the most important Truth in the Bible, if he was the Saviour of lost Sinners, *Luke 24. 21.* We trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel. But our Lord appeared quickly and confirmed them. 4. There may be such a trying Time as may shake the Foundation of all your Comforts, ye may debate your selves out of Assurance of a saving Interest, raze and tear all your Evidences, as ye will be ready to say, *My hope is perished from the Lord. Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for ever more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* *Psal. 77. 8, 9.* Ye are now robbed of all your Refuges, ye have nothing in all the World to trust to, Duties, Ordinances and Means, prove all dry Breasts, and Comforters of no Value; the Comforter that should relieve your Soul is far from you, and answers you not? 5. Such a Shaking-time as will try your Profession and Conversation, many who had a great Name for Religion will be found out to be Hypocritical, their Hearts not right with God, many who had a fair Outside to be Rotten-hearted, to be but Dross, not true Gold that abides the Furnace of Affliction, to be Chaff, not true Wheat

winnowed and purged by the Wind of Persecution. 6. Such a Time as will search your Graces, Men seem to have a warm Love, strong Faith, and long winnowed Patience, who, when shaken, may appear but Neighbour-like, they *seem in a Day of adversity*, because their Strength is but small. 7. Such a Shaking as brings above-board much Corruption, the Man would not have believed there was so much of Hell's Plenishing in his Heart: *Hazael* when the Prophet told him of the Evils he would do to the Children of *Israel*, — *Their strong holds will thou set on fire, and their young men will thou lay with the sword, — and rip up their women with child.* Said, — *What, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?* — 2 Kings 8. 12, 13. Yet when he was King of Syria, he did these things. Many who now profess Friendship to the Church, if Overturning Shaking-times were coming, would be ready to Apostatize from the Truth, and persecute the Saints. Because they want a Principle of Grace to make them steadfast in an evil Day. I come, *Thirdly*, To shew, Wherefore does the Lord so shake his People? *Answer*, 1. To disclose such who lurked under a naked Profession, and yet were Strangers to the Power of Religion; our Lord's Followers will not be the worse of wanting these. 2. That his Peoples Grace may be the more Pure, when long unshaken. Weeds grow about it, Dross cleaves to it; therefore he purges them, that they may come forth *a gold purified seven times*, Psal. 12. 6. 3. To discover the unseen Evils that are in their Hearts, the Dreg and Scum whereof boils up in the Furnace. 4. To wean your Hearts from the World, and set them on a better Country, and a more enduring Substance. 5. To make you Prize the Choice of God as your Portion, who will be your Refuge and Strength, and a very present Help in Trouble, who will keep you from being moved, and be a Help right early, Psal. 46. 1, 5.

Use 1. *Use the Lord thus to shake his People?* Then this may have these loud Cries to you; 1. O Soul, get true Gold, real Grace, tried in the Fire, no other will do thy Turn, if thou have only a Name, and a Show, the Storm will shake thee in Pieces, and blow thy Evidences out of Sight. 2. Art thou complaining? *Alas, no Body is shaken as I*, hear for thy Comfort, it is the Lot of God's Children to be just so dealt with. 3. Distinguish betwixt the Devil's Shakings, and these by the Lord, in a Day of Trial the Devil lets any Good that is in the fall through the Sieve, he holds Gripe only of thy Corruption to vex thee with it; but our gracious God lets thy Dross be purged away, but not one one Grain of Grace shall be lost. 4. Before the Trouble end, ye will be put through the small Sieve, it may come to *resisting unto Blood*.

More particularly to apply this to our own Case, hence learn 1. That in all probability our shaking-Times are hastning on us. 2. That it is our Duty to lay our Account with, and prepare for them.

I begin with the *First*, That such shaking-times are hastning on us, are quickly coming, is evident, 1. From the many abounding Sins which are the usual Forerunners of such Judgments, as great Barrenness and Unfruitfulness under the Gospel, may provoke God to take it from us, *Luke 12. 8*. Great Sensuality and Security, like the Men of *Lisbon*, when God calls to *Mourning*, nothing but *Feasting, Joy and Gladness*; therefore your *Iniquities shall not be purged away*, Isa. 22. 12. — 15. Many go on hardened in the grossest Scandals, in Adultery, Incest, Bigamy, Polygamy, Fornication, Drunkenness, and the like; This made a Shower of Fire come from Heaven on *Sodom*. And alas! there are now many Scandalous and Unchristian Divisions among Professors of Religion, when *Ephraim* was against *Judah*, and *Judah* against *Israel*, the *Roman Army* came at last and laid all the Land in a ruinous Heap. Your Divisions are aggravate by that,

Gen.

*Genesis 13. 7. There was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: And the Canaanite and Perizzite dwelt then in the land. Shall Herod and Pilate make you ashamed? They clapped up a Peace to strengthen themselves against Christ, and will not ye against the common Enemy? 2ly, The Fore-thoughts and Predictions of Friends, both from Pulpits, Presses and Scaffold, that God will ride his Chariots deep in Blood, in Repentment of his Controversie with Covenant-breaking Scotland, before the Return of his wonted Glory and Presence in the Sanctuary. These who have walked Streets in State, may run there in Distractions with one Leg or half an Arm, begging for Preservation of the other Members of their Body. Your Tears no Rescue, nor your Gold Redeem you: No, your Veins must weep as well as your Eyes, Showers, not of Rain, but of Blood to wash your Streets; No Noise there but Shreeks, Groans and Moans of dying Men; Your Kindred slain in one Place, your Wife in a second, or your Children in a third. 3ly, From the unwearied Preparations of our Enemies, for the Overthrow of our Religion and Liberty; what Concerts Abroad, Combinations at Home; What Numbers of Trafficking Priests and Jesuites, perverting the Simple, their Confidences high, their foreign Assistance noised to be ready; As the keeper of a field, so are our Enemies round about us, The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind, to devour Israel with open mouth: For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still, Isa. 9. 12. Jer. 4. 17. 4ly, The sad Posture we are in this Day, does portend Shakings; Our Enemies are encouraged to see the Ceremonies of their Religion brought in and mingled with ours, and Crouded after by many in Edinburgh; If we heartily resolved against Popery, what do we Protestants with their Garments, Gestures, Altars, Crosses and Liturgies among us? Upon this Reason the Divines of Hamburg withstood the Ceremonies of the Interim, as being Nerves of Popistical Superstition; So the Divines of Saxony, who Nurse up these Romish Brats, we cannot but suspect them to have too great Love to the Harlot that begat them. Our Enemies are also encouraged to see many among our selves essaying to swallow up one another, especially the Faithful in the Land, who are standing in the Gap to Intercede for it, it is like, many judge of these far otherways. But what says the Lord? The innocent preserve the Island, and it is delivered by the pureness of their hands, Job 22. 30. You may perhaps think, if ye were once free of these, ye would quickly be a prosperous Nation, but verily, Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah, Isa. 1. 9. Even the Professors of this Nation are divided, both in Judgment and Affection; Sure, if the Spirit of Love do not close up these Un-christian Breaches, the common Enemy will enter at them. How are we beating our Fellow-Servants? Decrying all that join not with us in our Opinions? This is too High, that too Low, but, how is an Enemy like the Tyrant Procrustes, will cut all of a length; and what is most sad to us, is most encouraging to our Enemies, they find us deeply guilty of abusing the choicest Mercies any Nation ever enjoyed, which makes them to be Flagellum Dei, the Scourge of God to avenge our Unthankfulness. What Blessings deserve to be stiled Matchless, Transcendent and Glorious that Scotland has not enjoyed? If Peace, Plenty, and Gospel Ordinances in Purity and Plenty be such, we had them: But *Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked!* O fearful Forerunner of National Ruin and Destruction! From all these it appears our Shaking and Suffering Times are at hand.*

Secondly, Since it is so, let us lay our Account with these Times, and prepare for them: In order to this, I shall, *First*, Give some general Counsels. *Secondly*, Some particular Directions:

X The first Counsel I give is, Abhor Popery, and be eminent in your Zeal against it; You know not how great your Danger may be by it; therefore be on your Watch: Rome is that *Amalek* with which God will never make Peace; neither let us: For, it is a false Religion, yet able to be cheated with false Coin, much more with false Doctrine; It is not built on the *Apostles* and *Prophecy*; but on lying Traditions; themselves acknowledge that their *Worshipping of Creatures*, *Sacrifice of the Mass*, *Purgatory* and other *Doctrines*, cannot be proved by Scripture, *Ararius Instit. Moral, Pars. 2. Lib. 4. Cap. 18.* It is a false Religion, For they ascribe the Glory of Man's Salvation to himself, not to Christ alone, to this end they maintain a *Twofold Justification*; one of the *Works*, when the first Grace is given to one that formerly was not *Gracious*. The other is of one already *Gracious*, which they call the second, *Table* (say they) is *obtained by the performing of good Works*, and the *Mercy* that proceeds from them, which is *granted to all that are in Age*. Yes, if you ask them the Question, *When a Sinner is to choose a Defense to take him to, or whereupon to Ground his Plea before the Throne of God?* They answer roundly, *That Man is justified by Inherent Grace alone, as the entire Form of Righteousness, without any Imputation of Christ's Righteousness*. So *Bellarmine* and *Suarez*. This is a most wicked false Doctrine, contrair to the Scripture, *Phil. 3. 9. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Rom. 3. 24.* As their Religion is False, so it is also *Blasphemous*, *Revel. 13. 1. Chap. 17. 3.* What is their Doctrine of the Pope's Power to grant *Indulgences* and *Pardons* for Sin, but *Blasphemy*; for, *Who can forgive sin but God only*, *Mark 2. 7.* They call the Pope *Christ's Vicar*, yea, a *Pseudo-God*, *Bellarmino de Concilio, Ambrosius, Lib. 2. Cap. 17.* does not stand to say, *That all the Names which are given to Christ in Scripture, from which it may be gathered, that he is over the Church, the same are given to the Pope*; Namely, *that he is the Head, the Bridegroom, the Foundation, the Shepherd of his Church, the Lord of God's House, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and the Root of David.* It is also a *Bloody Religion*, *Drunk with the Blood of the Saints*, have not *Britain & Ireland* formerly felt this, and all *Europe*; How great were the *Dutcheries* of the poor *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*? in one Expedition, one hundred thousand were cut off. The *Duke de Alva* boasted he had in his Time put eighteen thousand in the Hand of the Hangman for *Heresy*: And how cruel was the *Barbaram Massacre of Paris*, where, and through *France* in one Month above one hundred thousand were cut off in cold Blood, see *Thuan Hist. Lib. 53.* The News of it were received at *Rome* with all triumphant Expressions of Joy. *Sir John Temple's History of the Irish Rebellion, Page 10, 136, 148.* shews, that in the *Irish Massacre*, there were above two hundred thousand *Protestants* murdered, and the chief *Instigators* were *Priests, Friars and Jesuits*, the *Priests* gave the *Sacrament* to diverse *Irish*, on Condition, *They should neither spare Man, Woman, nor Child of the Protestants*. Bloody also were the *Cruelties* of *Queen Mary in England*, and the *Marys in Scotland*, in the *Dawning of the Reformation*. It is also a most uncomfortable Religion, it is impossible to get or keep true Peace of Conscience that way, for they destroy the Doctrine of free Grace, deprive People of the Privilege of reading the Scripture in their Native Tongue, and deny the Possibility of Assurance in this Life. And Finally, *Popery* is a damnable Religion, we have no Ground from Scripture to conclude the Salvation of such as believe their Doctrines in their complex Bulk, *Revel. 16. 9. 2 Thess. 2. 11, 12.* For this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.

A second Counsel I offer is, Use all proper Means to prevent these shaking Days that are threatened; As, mourn for the abuse of former Light and Liberty, plead, Remember

against all former fear, *Phil. 1. 7.* Be Make up your Breaches speedily, it is time, I think, when the Enemy is eating in at them. Do ye be wiser from God is sending to put you the Friends of Christ by the Bars? If ye cannot Pray, Mourn and Wrestle together; How can ye go to Prison, Scaffold, Stake, or Fire together? Prepare your selves for the worst; come what will, that your Hearts may not back, nor your Steps decline, the Authority and Reputation of Religion is so weakened in the World, by the looseness, Wantonness, and Contentions of Professors, that it is probable God will call for Christian Blood once more to Seal his Truth, and convince the World that there is a Reality in Godliness: And if it come to that, I tremble to think what Shrinking and Backdrawing will be among Professors. To prevent which I suggest these few particular Directions.

First, See the Ground ye stand in be good, that ye die in, as well as for the Faith: As ye on sure and safe Grounds, as to your Eternal State, if yet dubious? Oh! In Time make sure and quick Work, be sure that ye are justified by Faith; and this will give you Peace with God, and Access to him in the severest Trials, *Rom. 5. 1, 2, 3.* 2ly, Stand your Ground, he deserves to be hung up in everlasting Chains in Hell, that turns back on such a Cause and such a Christ on Earth? Can thou lose thy Life more Comfortably or Honourably, than by offering it up in Defence of the precious Truths of Christ, against his bold and blasphemous Adversaries? 3ly, Get ardent Love to Christ, this will carry thee through Fire and Water after him, where ever he goes, tho' the Way should lead directly to Mount Gilboa, *Song 8. 6, 7.* 4ly, Learn to deny your selves, it is Self only that is most pinched by Suffering, when the Cross comes, Christ and Self are brought into Competition. 5ly, Die to the World, get Minds and Hearts disintangled and loosed more from Worldly Relations and Enjoyments, lest with Demas ye forsake Christ, *2 Tim. 4. 10.* 6ly, Get free of the Fears of Suffering and the Instruments of it, *Isa. 43. 1.* Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee. Fear will make your Trials worse than really they are; it makes a Mole-hill seem a Mountain; A Man freed from Fear of Trials is eased of the heaviest Part of them; Fear makes a Christian worse than he is, less fit to engage with Trials than a weaker Person wanting Fear: It makes him unable and unwilling, *Fear has Torment, 1 John 4. 18.* It Dispirits and Discourages the Man, it exposes you to that which is worse than any Cross or Trial ye can meet with, *Jer. 1. 8.* Fear not their faces, for I am with thee. That is one Advice, but he adds another kind of Inducement, *Verse 17.* Fear not their faces, lest I confound thee, or break thee to pieces before them; That will be worse than any Trial they can inflict. If thou alledge, I cannot get free of this Fear? Answer, Endeavour to have a believing Impression on thy Spirit of God's Greatness and Man's Nothingness, read *Isaiah Chap. 40. Verse 10.* to the end. Believe his Sovereignty and Power, that he has all things at his Command, all Men's Hearts, Hands and Tongues, so as they cannot touch one Hair of your Head without his Permission: And be persuaded, that, let Man's Intentions be never so Malicious, the Issue of them, in Spite of Hell and the World, shall be Good to his People, *Rom. 8. 28.* 7ly, Get Corruption mortified, if this be once subdued, there will be less Reluctancy to Shaking-days: There will be less to oppose Christ's Will in a Suffering-day; There will be more Strength to bear Shakings: Unsubdued Sin is the Soul's Sickness and Distemper, *Prov. 24. 10.* Mortification is a Kind of Martyrdom, *Colos. 3. 5.* 8ly, Keep Conscience Tender, be Tender of his Truths, Worship, of all his Ways, of every Part of his Will, so as not to offend in the least. To avoid the Appearance of Evil, to hate the Garments spotted with the

Else: Fear the least Sin rather than the greatest Sorrow! *Oh*, Acquaint your selves more with God, what he is in himself, and to his People, *Endure a seeing of him who is invisible*, Heb. 11. 27. Take a View of his All-sufficiency, ye may as well doubt if all the Waters in the Ocean cannot fill a Cockle, as that the Divine Fullness cannot be enough to make you Happy, and supply all your Wants. Look to his Power that can make your Trials, however they seem heavy, Light, Easy, Sweet and Comfortable: And look to his Goodness; the former two make him Able, but his Goodness renders him Willing to do for his People under their Shakings. What can ye feel? What can ye fear? that All-sufficiency cannot provide, and infinite Goodness communicate? The Faith of this may preserve from Fainting, *Psal.* 27. 13. *10thly*, Get more Spiritual Strength, be diligent in the Use of all Means to that end. There is an Habitual Strength, which consists in the confirmed Habits of Grace: There is an actual Strength, in the Exercise of that Grace, expressed by *Girding up the Loins*; And there is an Auxiliary Strength, in Divine Influences and Assistances, *Ephes.* 6. 10. Now strengthen your selves every Way, for, the less Strength, the less will ye be able either to do or suffer, and the more Danger of sinful declining Suffering when called: Think on *Peter*, and make use of all strengthening Advantages & support under your Shakings; Keep up the Sense of former Comforts, *The Joy of the Lord is your Strength*, *Neh.* 8. 10. Make use of former Experiences, both your own and others, *Psal.* 77. 10, 11, 12. Stay your selves on the Word and Promises, no such Cordial in a fainting Fit, *Psal.* 119. 50. Get suffering Graces drawn out to Exercise. *Lastly*, Above all the rest, Faith enables to stand in a Day of Trial, *Ephes.* 6. 16. *Psal.* 27. 13. Let Faith act on the Attributes and Promises of God, take Encouragement by your Relations to him, Experiences of his Love, and Acts of Providence for you and others; By Faith the Worthies, *Hebrews* Chap. 11. *Stopped the Mouths of Lions, quenched the Violence of Fire, escaped the Edge of the Sword, out of Weakness were made Strong, endured cruel Mockings, Scourgings, yea moreover, Bonds, and Imprisonments.* Faith engages the Strength of Christ for you, it stays it self upon the Lord, *Isa.* 50. 10. It brings Strength from Heaven to the Soul, *Psal.* 27. 13, 14. It represents Christ standing by thee under thy Trials, Seeing, Hearing and Feeling your Distress; It discovers Heaven as open before you, and your present Trials as Momentary, which shall quickly resolve in endless Glory to all believing Sufferers, *2 Cor.* 4. 18.

For *Ministers*, to press you to prepare for these shaking trying Times, by the former Directions put in Practice, consider, *First*, How many Calls God has been giving you to this Work, by his Servants, who have warned you faithfully, and by his Rods which have a crying Voice to this City, *Micah* 6. 9. *2ly*, Suffering trying Times will prove fatal and destructive to People unprepared for them, but the Security of the People of God lies in their Preparation, *Luke* 14. 28. *Eph.* 6. 13. *3ly*, A Flench in a time of Trial will lose all, *Ezek.* 33. 13. *Gideon's* one Bastard destroyed all his seventy Sons. *4ly*, Consider how ready our Lord Christ was to suffer the vilest and hardest things, tho the Cup was most bitter, yet he drank it for you; he diligently prepared for, and cheerfully did undergo his great and sore Sufferings, and will ye dare to refuse or decline what is infinitely lesser for his sake? If it be objected, *Ah, prepare as I will, I fear Christ and I be shaken asunder when these Days come.* Answer, If thy Heart be sound in his Statutes, *tho thou fall yet thou shalt rise again*, Christ and thy Soul shall never part: This is evident from God's eternal electing Love, *Rom.* 8. 29. *Whom he loves, he loves to the end.* *John* 13. 1. From the Covenant of Grace, in the Bosom whereof is wrapt up all

all thy Salvation and Desire; the Author of it is no fickle Creature, but God faithful and true; it is sealed by the Blood of Christ the great Surety who has undertaken for us. From the strict and inviolable Union betwixt Christ and thy Soul, there is no separating of it, for by it all that is his is become thine; and thou art become an integral Part of his mystical Body, which would be defective if thou were cut off. Our Lord's Intercession in Heaven is always prevalent for Believers under their Trials, *Rom. 8. 39. Luke 22. 32.* His Spirit dwells and abides in them, he has begun his saving Work in thee, and he will carry it on till it be brought to Perfection, *Phil. 1. 6.* yea there are a Multitude of assertory and promissory Scriptures, the sweet Streams whereof run through the Book of God to refresh thy Soul, by which true Believers may be assured Christ and their Souls shall never be separate, as *1/a. 54. 10. Jer. 32. 40. John 4. 14. Chap. 6. 39. Chap. 10. 28. 1 Cor. 1. 8. 1 John 2. 19.* I come now, to what I observed more particularly from the Words considered with Respect to the Scope, as

Obsev. 1. That it is most difficult to excite and stir up People to accept of Christ in Gospel Offers. This is evident from the Scope of the Text as it stands connected with the preceeding Verse, *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, for he is as terrible now, yea more than when on Mount Sinai.*

To prepare this Doctrine for your Use, I shall, *First*, Open and prove it. *2ly*, Shew what makes it so hard and difficult to stir up People to accept Gospel Offers.

First, To explain and prove the Doctrine, I offer these following Considerations;
 1. That the Spirit of God being so oft grieved by our Affronts to Christ in resisting his Offers, is thereby provoked to suspend the Influences of Grace, so as our Heavens become Brass and our Earth Iron, tho' God come with his Word in one Hand, and his Rod in the other, yet a deaf Ear is given to both. *2ly*, It is much to prevail with People to give their external Ear to hear the Word, how much more to give the inward Ear of the Mind to understand it? *3ly*, Peoples Hearts and Minds, their Imagination and Affections are so scattered on the many diverting Vanities of a present World, as they mind not Salvation, are not persuaded of their need of Christ. *4ly*, Consider the way they must be persuaded, and you will see Difficulty in it, it is managed by the Spirit of God as the principal Agent, and that by these several Acts, 1. An Illumination of the Mind opening their Eyes to see their Sin and Danger, till this be done no Man can be persuaded to abandon his Idols and renounce himself, and a Sight of Christ's Ability and Willingness to save, sets them in Motion toward him. *2ly*, By the authoritative Call or commanding Voice of the Spirit in the Word, *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, 1 John 3. 23.* This is a Voice full of awful Majesty and Power, that answers all Pleas against accepting Christ from our own Unworthiness. *3ly*, He breathes Life in the conditional Promises, *Matth. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. John 6. 37. Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out:* By these he pulls up the Spirits of poor drooping Souls. Since I am assured of Welcome, Ease, Rest and Refreshment, (says the Soul) why should I slight a Duty so necessary, and so much to my own Advantage? *4ly*, He bears home dreadful Threatnings of the Word against refusing Christ, as in Verse 25. and in Text, *Mark 16. 16. He that believeth not, shall be damned, 2 Thel. 1. 9. The Lord will come in flaming Fire to take Vengeance on them that obey not the Gospel;* these excite and persuade to make earnest of this Duty without Delay; for if there be Justice in Heaven, or Fire in Hell, they who reject Christ must and shall perish to Eternity. *5ly*, He sets moving and working Examples before them in the Word, of such as came

to Christ loaded with deepest Guilt, and under many Discouragements, and yet was made Welcome, as Paul the chief of Sinners, who is set up as a Pattern for them which should hereafter believe on him, 1 Tim. 1. 13, 17. Who would not be prevailed to come to Christ after such an Example? But if this do not, know, that such Refusers shall surely at Death be shut up in the Prison of Hell; even as these who of old were not Obedient to the Warnings given by Noah, a preacher of Righteousness, 1 Pet. 3. 19, 20. 6ly, He effectually overcomes, and victoriously conquers the Heart and Will, on which they accept Christ.

Secondly, I come to shew what makes it so difficult to persuade Souls to embrace Christ; and 1. Men are by Nature dead in Sin, Eph. 2. 1. it is no wonder then it be difficult to make the dead hear his Voice and live. 2ly, Many are lying in profound Ignorance, Knowledge must go before Faith, John 8. 24. Rom. 10. 14. there must be an Assent of the Mind to the great Truths of the Gospel, before there can be a Consent of the Will to embrace the offered Salvation. 3ly, Many are drowned in gross Atheism, Stupidity and Unconcernedness, they believe not the things of an invisible World, the Glory to be revealed, or Misery threatned, and the Necessity of Faith and Holiness for securing the one, and avoiding the other; they put the evil Day far away, things at Distance affect them not, they consider not their Hazard and Danger. 4ly, From the Unsuitableness betwixt the Things of Christ and the Temper of a Sinner, *Matth. 16. 23.* they savour not the things that be of God. A carnal Heart is satisfied with carnal and sensual Contentments, a gilded Trifle will please a Child more than a Crown of Gold, set with Gems and Pearls; every Nature delights in things suitable to it self; *The carnal Mind is enmity against God, and neither is nor can be subject to the Law of God, Rom. 8. 7.* 5ly, Men are so crouded with the World, its Snares and Temptations, that the Noise thereof drowns Christ's Voice, so as it cannot be heard: They are settled on their Portion in this Earth, they never dream of another World, to make a sure Purchase there, is never their uptaking Business. 6ly, The Gospel has been so long among People, it is become so familiar and ordinar a thing to hear a Man preach, that they think nothing of it more than old Wives Fables; they never or very seldom after hearing retire to their Closet to ruminate on it, to examine themselves by it, and to pray for the Blessing; but spend their Time in Vanity, and Galeo-like, care for none of these things, which are of their eternal Concern. 7ly, Many are cheated by Satan, who puts on a false Varnish on things, and by the deceitfulness of their own Hearts which turn them aside, so as they cannot deliver their own Soul, nor see that there is a He in their right Hand, *Isa. 44. 20.* 8ly, God hath given many of his Servants that Commission he gave to *Isaiah, Chap. 6. 10.* *Make the Heart of this People fat, make their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes; lest they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Heart, and convert and be healed.* They are joined to Idols, let them alone, He that is filthy let him be filthy still.

Use 1. Of Lamentation, over such to whom Christ has been so long offered, and to this Day no persuading of them to accept him. Let me tell you with deep Regret, ye are fast in the Devil's Chains, it will be the Hell of Hells to you that ever ye heard Christ, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for you. What Reason can ye give at that Day why ye accepted not his Offer? Was it not urged upon you? Did not Rods back the Word? Did not Conscience challenge you for refusing? O, ye will be inexcusable! Shall Christ and you part so, have we no

hopes

hopes of prevailing with you? If we can do no more, we must even lament your wilful Ruin and Destruction, weep over your Funerals as Self and Soul-Murderers.

Use 2. Of Exhortation, O unthinking negligent Souls, awake from your Unbelief and Security, and be persuaded to accept of Christ's Calls to you in this Gospel, whose Voice then shook the Earth, but now shakes not the Earth only, but also the Heaven. To Day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts. To urge this, consider, 1. What a Mercy is it, your Lot and Providence is cast under the Gospel, from your Youth under the Calls of God? He has not dealt so with other Nations, refuse him not. 2. What a Favour is it, that your Lives are lengthned out, by God's Patience under the Gospel, that neither that golden Lamp, nor the Lamp of your Lives is yet put out, thousands cotemporary with you are now shut up, and God's Treaty is at an End with them. 3. How heavy will it be to sink into Hell with the Offers of Christ, and Calls of God sounding in your Ears, to fall down betwixt the tender outstretched Arms of Mercy? This is the racking Enging the Consciences of the Damned are tortured on, *Mark* 11. 23. 4. God will not hear your Cries in the Time of your Misery, if ye neglect his in the Time of Mercy, *Prov.* 1. 24, 25, 26. 5. This may be the last Call God intends to give you; Sure there is a last abiding you, and how know ye but this is it? After which nothing but an eternal dead Silence, his Spirit shall no more strive with you, if ye continue to resist. 6. While ye thus put off Salvation-work, ye can never come to an Evidence of your Election, nor to any solid Ground of Comfort, which cannot be secured but by Effectual Calling, *2 Pet.* 1. 10. 7. What keeps you off? Have ye any greater Matters in Hand than the Offers of Christ? If ye think the Things of Time of more Moment than Eternity is, I can assure you ye will not be long of this Mind. 8. Do not ye every Day easily embrace the Calls of Satan and your Lusts, while God, Christ and Conscience strive in vain? 9. See how seriously and painfully others mind their Salvation-work, and are not ye as much concerned as they? Does it not gall and vex you, when ye compare your selves with them? 10. God will shortly give you an irresistible Call to the Grave, and if ye obey not his Call to come to Christ first, What an uneasy Death-bed will ye have? How dreadful is it for a poor Christless Sinner, to sit quivering in a Dying-hour, ready every Moment to fall into eternal Torments! Lastly, If ye be of the Number of Christ's Elect, ye are gifted to him, and why would you detain his own from him? Ye are dear bought, cost a great Ransom, the precious Blood of the Lamb of God, a Rate far beyond your Worth, let him have his dear bought Penny-worth. Ye shall get a noble Pond in him, the greatest Purchase ever was made in the World; Yes, ye shall have more than a thousand Worlds can afford, he that has the Son has all, *All things are yours if Christ be yours*, *1 Cor.* 3. 22. Tho' ye have not an universal Exemption from Crosses, yet something to render them easie, if not Delivery from them, ye shall get Delivery in them: Ye shall ly as in a Bed of Roses: Ye shall want nothing. True, ye are to get it by begging at the Throne of Grace, *Ezek.* 36. 37. Yet every Day shall be a Deal-day, *He will fill the hungry with good things*, *Luke* 1. 53. *He will withhold nothing that is good*, *Psal.* 84. 11. Thou shall have a Right to all the Privileges of the Covenant in their greatest Latitude; thou may claim for them at the Throne of Grace, and when he comes at the Great-day, *He will make every Person who now accepts his gracious Offers, Ruler over all that he has*, not only an Enjoyer of all, but a Ruler over all. I proceed to

Observe 2. That it was our Lord Christ who gave the Law under the Old Testament, as well as now the Offers of himself in the Gospel.

That

That our Lord offers himself in the Gospel, none can doubt who read the New Testament; Particularly *Matth. 11. 28, 29. Chap. 23. 37. John 6. 37. Chap. 7. 37.* That he also gave the Law on Mount Sinai, is evident; For, he is the Angel, even the Angel of the Covenant, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, *Exod. 3. 2, 4.* and who gave the Law, *Exod. 19. 20. Chap. 20. 1.* which may be confirmed by the Testimony of the *Protomartyr Stephen, Acts 7. 37, 38.* — *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.* This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively Oracles to give unto us. And by the Apostle, *Gal. 3. 19.* The Law was added because of transgressions, — and ordained by Angels in the hand of a Mediator: This is he who then shook the Earth.

Our Lord Christ has all the choice Qualifications of a Law-giver, Laws are founded on Reason, infinit Wisdom is with him, *Job 9. 4. He is wise in Heart, 1 Tim. 1. 17. He is the only wise God.* And Laws must be clothed with Authority: tho' a Subject may make good Laws, yet they want the Stamp of Authority. God has Supreme Power in his Hand, he that gives Men their Lives, may give them their Laws.

The Moral Law well becomes such a noble Legislator; For, *It is perfect, Psal. 19. 7.* It is an exact Model and Platform of Religion; it is the Standard of Truth; it is unalterable, ever in Force; the Ceremonial and Judicial Laws were Abrogate, but the Moral Law is founded on the Law of Nature, and never can be changed; And it is most illustrious, our Lord put Glory on it even in the manner of its Promulgation; For, the People before it was delivered, were to wash their Clothes, *Exod. 19. 10. Bounds were set that none might touch the Mount, verse 19.* To beget Reverence in all that Assembly, He wrote the Law with his own Finger, *Exod. 31. 18.* an Honour never put on any other Writing, he put it in the Ark to be kept, as a proper Cabinet for this Jewel; And at the Delivery multitudes of Angels gave Attendance, *Deut. 33. 2.* But the great Arch-Angel, the Angel of the Covenant, was the Speaker; He spoke all on Mount Sinai, as he does now all on Mount Zion.

Inference 1. Did Christ give us the Law, then bless him for it, *Psal. 147. 19, 20.* He gave his Word to Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments to Israel: He hath not dealt so with any Nation, they have not known them: Praise ye the Lord. Other Nations are lying under heathenish Darkneſs, have no other Apostles and Teachers than Sun, Moon and Stars, blind Mahometans hear nothing of Salvation through Christ, the Papists have the Bible shut up in an unknown Tongue, it is a sealed Book, It is enough to be suspected of Heresie for any among them to read it in the vulgar Tongue; how great Ground have we to bless God, who has given us, unworthy us, such an inestimable Treasure? 2ly, Since Christ has given the Law, then this may condemn the Antinomian Doctrine: *Salmarsh*, one of their Teachers, in his Book called *Free Grace*, Page 212 and 146, says, *The Law as given by Moses is no Rule to Christians* — I wonder any should contend for the Mystery of the Law of the Ten Commands under Moses — Nor is Holiness and Sanctification now such as is fashioned by the Law or outward Command, but by the preaching of Faith, by which the Spirit is given which sanctifies a Believer, and makes him the very Law of Commands in himself, and his Heart the very two Tables of Moses. This is impious Doctrine, for tho' Believers be delivered from the Curse of the Law by virtue of Christ's Satisfaction, yet no Christians are freed from the Moral Law, as a Rule of their Life and Practice for directing them in the way of Holiness, but are bound to obey it; for, our Lord Christ came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil, Matth. 5. 17. He does explain the spiritual Sense

Sense of the Law in his excellent Sermon on the Mount, and presses his Disciples in all Ages to perform it; the Apostles in the whole Course of their Doctrine commend the Moral Law as necessary to be obeyed, *Rom. 12. 8, 9. 1 John 2. 7, 8.* The Doctrine of Faith does not make void the Law, but establishes it, *Rom. 3. 31.* And this Moral Law is Indispensible, so as to oblige all Men in all Places and Conditions: It is founded on, and agreeable to the Law of Nature, no Man can be freed from Obedience to it. Away therefore with such wicked Antinomian Doctrine, and let us cheerfully obey the Law that was spoken by, and ordained in the Hands of a Mediator. 3ly, Let us believe and be persuaded of the Divinity of the Law of God; Christ spoke it, and his Name is written on each particular Command, *Matth. 23. 7. Lo I have told you, shall we not give Credit to the God of Heaven?* If we believe not this, all is lost. The word preached did not profit, *not being mixed with Faith in them that heard it, Heb. 4. 2.* There be Characters of the Divinity of the Law written on every Part of it, but the Spirit of God effectually persuades us of the same, let us pray for this Spirit. 4ly, Let us love the Law which Christ spoke, *Psal. 119. 97. O how love I thy Law: it is my meditation all the day. Drink in the sincere milk of his word, that ye may grow thereby: Love the Law because of its matchless Excellency, it searches and tries the Heart, Heb. 4. 12. It awakens and terrifies the Conscience, When the Command came, Sin revived and I died, Rom. 7. 9. It converts the Soul, Psal. 119. 7. It Strengthens against Temptation, Ephes. 6. 17. It Comforts in Distress, Psal. 119. 49, 50. It is a Heavenly Directory to guide us to Glory, Psal. 119. 105. It is exactly True, it is compleatly Holy like its Author; And in a word, it is better than all the Comforts on Earth, who would not love it? 5ly, Read the Words Christ spoke, and meditate frequently on them: Kings themselves are obliged to this, *Deut. 17. 18, 19.* Read them not as a common Story, but with Faith, Love, and particular Application. Remember his Words, they are Words of Weight that concern your Salvation. *David says, Thy Word have I hid in my Heart, that I might not sin against thee, Psal. 119. 11.* God's Oracles are Ornaments, and shall we forget them? Think on them with Reverence, as Words bearing the Authority of a God; every word of the Moral Law is an Oracle from Heaven. 6ly, Frequently confer and talk about the Law, the Words our Lord spoke when his voice shook the Earth, *teach them to your Children, Deut. 6. 7. Chap. 11. 18, 19.* This Duty is much neglected in our Day, which occasions great Decay in practical Godliness; If ye would prevent the Ruin of Religion in this Place, and of your own poor Posterity, I entreat you retrieve this Duty, and set effectually about the Practice of it: I proceed to*

Observe 3. How great soever the Shakings at the Givings of the Law on Mount Sinai were, yet the Shakings, Alterations and Changes in the World, by Christs coming in the Days of the Gospel, and by his Voice at the great Day, are far more Illustrious and Remarkable.

This seems to be the very Design of the Text, as formerly explained, for the Apostle compares the one and the other, preferring the Later before the Former, and improves all as an Argument to hearken to Christs Voice in the Gospel. To Illustrate and Confirm this Point, I shall not now enter on the Shaking and Commotion of the Earth by giving the Law on Mount Sinai, having spoke of that already on Verses 12, 19, 20 and 21. but shall only, First, Give some Account of the Shakings and Alterations in Heaven and Earth, by Christs coming in the Days of the Gospel. Secondly, Of the Shakings by his Voice at the great Day.

As to the First, The Shakings in Heaven and in Earth, by Christ's coming in the Days of the Gospel, will appear to be very Illustrious and Remarkable; Yea, more than those on Mount Sinai, if ye consider the following Particulars. 1. Our Lord's wonderful descending from Heaven to take on him our Nature. By this he shook the Heaven, Ephes. 4. 9. *Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended, first into the lower parts of the earth? God manifest in the Flesh, is such a miraculous Change as may be the Wonder of Men and Angels to Eternity. That the Creator should be one Person with the Creature, the Antient of Days should be an Infant of Years, that he should not personate but really assume our Nature to an Union with his own Person, not for a Day but for ever; And that our Nature is thus exalted above that of Angels, for in it our Lord dispenses Gifts and Graces to his Church; Yea, in it he judges the World at the great Day.* 2. Look to his miraculous Birth and Conception. Conceived by the Power of the holy Ghost, in the Womb of a Virgin, born of her yet without sin, is a wonderful Shaking of the ordinary Course of the World, such as never was, nor will be again. A greater Wonder than all the Thunders on Mount Sinai. *That our Lord should be conceived by the Power of the holy Ghost, yet not the Son of the holy Ghost; Born of a Mother, yet his Mother a Virgin; born of a sinful Woman, yet free of Sin; born of his Mother, and yet the Creator of his Mother; made Sin for us, yet free of Sin; our Maker made like to one of us.* O remarkable Wonder! 3. The Heavens were shaken at his Birth, for a heavenly Host of Angels did Celebrate the Solemnity by a Song of Praise, *Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth Peace, good Will towards Men,* Luke 2. 13, 14. 4. His Birth was Honoured by a Star, so remarkable, as the wise Men of the East observed it, and came to Worship him that is born King of the Jews, Matth. 2. 1. 5. The Earth was also shaken: Herod the Great was so afraid of our Lord, tho' a Child, that he caused kill all the Children in Bethlehem, and the Coasts thereof, from two Years old and under, Matth. 2. 16: of purpose to kill him; tho' he was frustrate of his wicked Design. 6. At his Baptism he shook the Heavens, The Heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended like a Dove, and lighted upon him. And so, a Voice from Heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,* Matth. 3. 16, 17. 7. The very Devils were shaken before him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, *What have I to do with thee Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not,* Mark 5. 7. 8. In the Discharge of his Work; he did many astonishing Miracles on the Earth, Sea and dry Land, *The Blind got Sight, the Deaf Heard, the Lame did Walk, the Sick were Cured, the Dead were raised to Life, the Dumb Spoke;* So can he yet, and in a Spiritual Sense does to all his People; makes their blinded Eyes see his Glory, their deaf Ears hear his Voice, their closed Lips sing his Praise, *Quickens these who are dead in Sin, and to them who have no Might increases Strength:* He cast the Devils out of the possessed, and will cast them out of your Hearts; He walked on the Sea to come to his Disciples, and nothing will hinder him from Access to his Saints. 9. At his Death the Heavens and the Earth were shaken, *The Vail of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;* The Partition betwixt Jews and Gentiles removed, *The Earth did tremble and shake, the Graves were opened, the Sun was clothed with Darkness for three Hours Space,* of which a Heathen Philosopher then in Greece said, *Either the God of the World suffers, or the World shall shortly suffer Dissolution:* Then was Satan's Kingdom shaken and dissolved; then did our Lord triumph over Principalities and Powers; then did he finish the Work of our Redemption; and then did he merit a Crown of Glory to himself and to all who believe on his Name. 10. He shook the Heavens and the Earth by his Resurrection and glorious Ascension, the Gates of Death nor the Bars of Brass could not hold him, tho' they

sealed

loosed the ~~stone~~ ^{stone}, and set a Watch, yet he rose the third Day, as was foretold, and became the first Fruits of them that sleep. He ascended in Triumph, the Heavens were rent before him, thousands of Angels attended his triumphant Chariot, Psalm 68. 17. with cheerful Songs of Joy and Praises, Psalm 47. 5, 6. He is gone thither as our Forerunner, he sits there at the Father's right Hand to agent our Cause. 11. He shook the Heavens of the *Mosaicall Worship*, with the Earth of their *Political State*, these were so shaken, as shortly after to be removed, for the Introduction of the more heavenly Worship of the Gospel, the *Evangelical Church State*; This was the greatest Commotion and Alteration God ever made in the Heavens and Earth of the Church, and was to be made this once only. By the *Messiah's Death*, The *Sacrifice and daily Oblation were made to cease*, Daniel 9. 27. He blotted out the *Hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us and contrary to us*, he took it out of the way, nailing it to the Cross, Coloss. 2. 14. The Ceremonial Law being only to *Typifie* Christ to come, we are really loosed from it by his Death, even as a Wife is loosed from her Husband by his Death, and at Liberty to marry another; And we are declared to be free from it by the Doctrine of the Apostles, by calling in the *Gentile Church*, who could not all assemble at Jerusalem to solemn Feasts and Sacrifices thrice a Year, and by the full preaching of the Gospel over the World, and introducing a *Purer Worship*. 12. Heathen Idolatry was also shaken at Christ's coming, the Oracles of the *Demons* could no longer after this give their Responses. *Plutarch* in his *Morals*, writes a Treatise of the Silence of Oracles; *Juvenal* and *Lucan* confess it, the *Delphick Oracle* gave this as its last Response, *A Hebrew Boy King of the Heavens has commanded me to leave this House, and pack to Hell; therefore go thou silent from my Altar*. Lastly, The Heavens and Earth were shaken by the spreading of the Gospel over the World, and Conversion of *Gentile Nations*, in the space of few Years after our Lord's Ascension; So free a Course had the Word and was Glorified, it run over most Parts of the then known World. *Tertullian* who wrote toward the end of the second Century, in his Book against the *Jews*, says, *Many Territories of the Moors; all the Borders of Spain, and these very Places of Britain, that were inaccessible to the Romans, are now Subject to Christ*. The *Roman Emperors*, and Armies that conquered the World, could not conquer the Kingdom of Christ, their Persecutions could not hinder the spreading of the Gospel; Nay, *The Blood of the Martyrs was the Seed of the Church*, their Doctrine was not blown away with their Ashes, but their Deaths did convert more than their Life. The Earth was moved, shaken and changed, all Nations were stirred up, some to enquire after Christ, some to oppose him; whereupon great Concussions and Commotions did ensue, until all the most noble Parts of it were made subject to him; So had this Prophecy an Accomplishment. I proceed now

In the second Place, To speak of the Shakings by Christ's Voice at the great Day. Having spoke of the Nature of the Judgment on Verse twenty third, it now only remains to shew, That the Shaking by it will be greater than at giving of the Law on Mount Sinai; Which is evident if you consider, 1. That then the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise, the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat, the Earth and the Works therein shall be burnt up, 2 Pet. 3. 10. Then shall be a wonderful Conflagration, when the Heavens shall be rolled up as a Scroll, and all things shall be dissolved; Unspeakably greater than one Mountain burning with Fire at the giving of the Law. 2. It will be more Awful and Terrible, hence it is called, *The Judgment of the great Day*, Jude verse 6. Our Lord Christ's Coming will be most Solemn and Awful, He shall descend from Heaven with a Show, with the Voice of the Arch-angel, and with the Trump of God: Then shall we be caught up in the Clouds.

sermons upon

Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air, 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17. He will come out of Heaven with Shouts of Angels, infinitely greater than these Shouts heard among Seamen, when after a long and tedious Voyage, they come within sight of Land, or than Armies give in the Day of Battel. The Matter Christ comes about will make it Terrible, the Dead being raised shall be gathered before the great Throne on which Christ shall sit in his Glory; where his Work will be to judge the Secrets of Men according to this Gospel, Rom. 2. 16. To separate the Tares from the Wheat: O how Solemn in this! The Execution of the Sentence; O what Dread and Terror is in that! The Heart of Man cannot conceive the Impressions the Voice of Christ will make on the Hearts of Believers and Unbelievers at that Day: The latter will be made to cry for hills and mountains to hide them from the Face of him that sits on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great Day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand, Revel. 6. 16, 17.

3. This Day will be more critical and exact, than that was at Mount Sinai. Every Man will be weighed till Ounces and Drains. The Name of the Judge is, *The Searcher of Hearts, whose Eyes are as flames of Fire, that pierce to the dividing between the Heart and the Reins. Of every idle word that Men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, Matth. 12. 36: Justice will hold Ballances in an even Hand.*

4. It will be more Universal. *2 Cor. 5. 10. We must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ. Rom. 14. 12. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

5. It will be full of convictive Clearness, all things are so clearly sifted, both as to Saints and Sinners, that Christ's Sentence shall be applauded; *Righteous are thou O Lord, because thou hast judged thus, Psal. 119. 161.*

6. It will be final and Supreme, from which no Appeal, being the Sentence of the highest Lord.

7. It will tend more to the Display of our Lord's Glory, than his Appearance at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, for it will make his Kingly Office shine in great Brightness. He will be glorified before the World, for all the Inhabitants of Heaven, Earth and Hell will be there together, *2 Thess. 1. 7.*

8. And this will for ever roll away the Reproach of his Death. Pilate and the high Priests that judged him at that Bar, shall stand quivering at his Tribunal, with Herod and his Men of War that led him as a sough, crying for Mountains to fall on them, and cover them from the wrath of the Lamb.

Inference 1. Are the Commotions and Shakings by Christ's coming in the Days of the Gospel, greater than these by giving the Law at Mount Sinai? There is our Lord a very great and considerable Person, he is the Creator and Saviour of the World, our only God and King. All the Mosaiical Dispensation was only to pave his Way, to quicken the Desires of his People after him, and to render his Approach the more acceptable and lovely, as a dark Night before a pleasant Day.

Inference 2. Then the Gospel makes a great Alteration in the World. The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid: And the Calf, and the young Lion, and the Failing together, and a little Child shall lead them. The sucking Child shall play on the hole of the Asp, and the weaned Child shall put his Hand on the Cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy Mountain: For the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea, Isa. 11. 6—10. That is, Men of fierce, cruel and ungodly Dispositions shall be so transformed by the preaching of the Gospel, that they shall become most Humble, Gentle and Tractable, and shall no more vex and persecute God's poor People, but shall become such as they, of which we have Instances in Saul's being made a Paul, and the rugged Jaylor's Conversion, Acts 16, and innumerable others. Kings of the Earth do move and combine against the Church and Kingdom of Christ, but can never ruin it, Dan. 2. 44. — It shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Inference

Inference 3. *Does Christ's Voice shake the Heavens and the Earth?* Then how reasonable is it for you to hearken to his Voice, and accept his Offers in the Gospel? *If ye refuse, how can ye stand before him who shakes the Heavens and the Earth?* He will grind you to Pieces, and pour out upon you the Judgments written in his Word; but if ye accept, he will be a Cover from the Tempest, a hiding Place from the Wind, and as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land, and a Refuge to you in times of Trouble. He will perform all the Promises written in his Word to you, he will give you Grace and Glory, and be your God and Guide even unto Death.

Inference 4. *Whatever shall be the Terrible of these shaking Times, yea even of the great Day of Judgment; yet great is the Security of Believers, who shall condemn them since Christ is their Judge?* He died to save you, and he will come again openly to absolve you.

Inference 5. Prepare for that great and terrible Day of the Lord, by avoiding these Sins, and practising these Duties which the Consideration of that Day calls and persuades you to: As, be Meek and Patient under Injuries and Abuses for Christ's sake, James 5. 7, 8, 9. Be communicative, publick spirited Christians, devising liberal things for Christ's distressed Members, *Matth. 25. 34, 41.* Be watchful and sober, keep the golden Bridle of Moderation on all your Actions and Affections, *Luke 21. 34, 35.* Phil. 4. 5. and improve all your Talents, all Gifts and Graces and Opportunities for God's Service, diligently and faithfully, *Matth. 25. 14. to 31.*

Observe. 4. *All Kind of Shakings of the World that can fall out, are by way of Promise to Believers.* For, says the Text, *But now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake, not the Earth only, but also Heaven.* When our Lord proclaims the Day of the Vengeance of our God, he declares also the *Acceptable Year of the Lord*, and Comforts them that mourn, *Isa. 61. 1, 2, 3.* These Judgments that sweep off the Wicked, pay Tribute to Believers Advantage.

To prepare this Note for your Use, I shall, 1. Shew how it appears, that all Shakings that come to Believers are by way of Promise. 2ly, Why they are attended with Promises and rich Advantages to the Godly, and heavy Judgments to the Wicked.

As to the first, *That all Shakings that come to Believers are by way of Promise*, is evident if you consider, 1. God's great Design in shaking and trying his People, it is to accomplish the Tenor of the well ordered Covenant to them, *Psal. 89. 33, 34.* To humble them, *Deut. 8. 2.* To separate betwixt them and Sin, *Isa. 27. 9.* To try their Grace, *1 Pet. 1. 7.* To improve their Graces and Experiences, *Rom. 5. 3, 4.* To wean them from the things of Time, and to fix their Eyes on an eternal Weight of Glory, *2 Cor. 4. 17.* And in a Word, to work together to their Good, *Rom. 8. 28.* 2ly, There is no shaking trying Dispensation the Lord's People can meet with in the World, but there are peculiar Promises for their Comfort and Support under it: Thus if the Trial be the fiery Darts of Satan's Temptations, the Lord hath promised to tread Satan under thy Feet, *Rom. 16. 20.* He conquered Satan, triumphed over Principalities and Powers, he suffered, being tempted, that he may be able to succour those who are tempted, *Heb. 2. 18.* If the Dispensation be Banishment and Removal from Gospel Ordinances, he has promised, *Although I have cast them far off among the Heavens, and although I have scattered them among the Countreys, yet will I be to them as a little Sanctuary in the Countreys where they shall come,* *Ezek. 11. 16.* He can make the private Fellowship of Saints Sweet, and allow his People so much of his own Presence, as to make up all their other Wants. If Error and Propriety abounding, should be the shaking Dispensation of the Time, the

the Lord has promised to send his Spirit to guide his People into all Truth, John 14. 13. The Winds shall not blow till the Lord mark his sealed Ones, Rev. 7. 3. The Dragon spew out a Flood against the Woman, yet she shall bring forth the Man-Child and be preserved, Rev. Chap. 12. The Lord had Saints in Ager's Household, and can preserve his People pure from the Pollutions of the worst of Times. If the Sword of a foreign Enemy be the Trial, our Lord is sent to save us from our Enemies, and the bands of them that bound us, Luke 11. 71. He has said, Seek Righteousness, seek Meekness, it may be, ye shall be hid in the Day of the Lord's Anger, Zeph. 2. 3. He who preserved Lot in Sodom, and Noah in the Ark, can, if he please, preserve you in the greatest Hazards. If Famine shake the Earth, he can keep his People alive in Famine, Psal. 23. 19. He can make a little go far, as the Widow's Barrel of Meal, and Cuisse of Oil, or can lay wonderfully to Hand. If the Church should be never so low, he has promised, the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, Math. 16. 18. He can raise up Magistrates and Ministers for Relief of it, and pour out his Spirit on all Ranks of Persons, Joel 2. 28. He who preserved the Church in the Ark in Egypt, and under Antichristian Darkness, and restored it from so low a Condition, can give Relief in the greatest Strait it ever can be in afterward. If the Lord should shake you by fiery Persecutions, yet the Rod of the Wicked shall not rest upon the Lot of the Righteous, Psal. 125. 3. God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, 1 Cor. 10. 13. In your Afflictions he is afflicted, Isa. 63. 9. If ye suffer with him, ye shall be glorified with him, Rom. 8. 17. If he hide his Face, it is but for a Moment, but with everlasting loving Kindness will he have Mercy on thee, Isa. 54. 8. Yea even in Death he has promised, in the valley and shadow of it thou needs fear no Evil, Psal. 23. 4. Finally, When he comes to shake the Heavens and the Earth, the Sea and the dry Land, it is to introduce the Saviour of Sinners, The Desire of all Nations, Haggai 2. 6, 7. to Purchase Believers with his own Blood, and lay a solid Foundation for their Comfort; and when he comes to unshake the World on its Foundations, to consume it with devouring and unquenchable Fire, then may they lift up their Heads with joy, for their Redemption draws nigh, Luke 21. 28, then shall they be compleatly Blessed in the full Enjoyment of our blessed Lord for evermore.

In the second Place, I am to shew why such trying shaking Dispensations are attended with Promises and rich Advantages to the Godly, and heavy Judgments to the Wicked; And, 1. Because the one stands under a Covenant Relation to God, but the other in direct Opposition to him; the one has an Interest in all Christ's Purchase, but upon the other he is obliged to take Vengeance as a Refuser to hearken to his Voice. 2y, Believers are taught at Christ's School, a holy Dexterity of sucking Spiritual Food, out of what the other sucks nothing but Poison. 3y, The Scriptures of Truth have foretold it shall be so: The Child Jesus is set for the fall as well as the rising again of many in Israel, Luke 2. 34. Christ crucified is to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, the Power and the Wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. Say ye to the Righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the Fruit of their doings: Wo unto the Wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him, Isa. 3. 10, 11.

Inference 1. Is it so, that all Kind of Shakings that can fall out in the World are by way of Promise to Believers? Then ye who never to this Day believed on Christ, sad and lamentable is your Condition; for when evil Times come, they are Messengers to execute God's Wrath against you, you have no Interest in the Promises while out of Christ; yea all the Threats and Curses in the Word belong to you, ye cannot stand in

a Day of Persecution and Distress, but will be ready to turn Apostates and Persecutors of the Saints, and in fine, to inherit everlasting Regions of Darkness and Wo. The only Method to prevent this, is, to repent and accept of Christ as offered in the Gospel, that ye may be happy in Time, and to Eternity.

Inference 2. Whatever trying Times may fall out in the World, the Lord's People may have Comfort and Encouragement, for they come to them by way of Promise, they have a Right to Christ, and with him to all the Promises, and all things shall work together for their good.

Inference 3. Believers, Do all Trials come to you by way of Promise? Then in the most shaking Dispensations make use of the most precious Promises. In Order to this End, I recommend to you, 1. Believe and be perswaded of the Divinity, Truth and Verity of the Promises, that they are indited by the Spirit of God, and exactly suited to the various Conditions of your Souls; they are one lovely part of sacred Scripture, which is all Divinely inspired, 1 Tim. 3. 15. 2 Pet. 1. 19, 21. The Characters of their divine Authority are ingraven on them, and the Spirit of God fully convinces you of it. 2^d, Bless God for these Promises, Praise him for his whole Word, Psal. 147. 19, 20. And more especially for these sweet Breasts of Consolation, at which ye may suck, and be satisfied in the Day of your Distress. 3^d, Accept cheerfully, cordially and thankfully what our Lord offers to you in the Promises; frequently renew your Covenant Engagements with himself, if ye be Strangers to covenanting with Christ, ye have Right to none of these refreshing Cordials. 4th, Eye Christ in the Promises, they are all yea and amen in him, they are all given in him and by him, 2 Cor. 1. 20; they are purchased by his Death, founded upon his Execution of his Mediatorial Offices, and applied by his Spirit. 5th, Store up the Promises suitable to your various Conditions, in your reading sacred Scripture, put a Remark on them, confer and talk with experienced Christians about them, let them be the Subject of your frequent and serious Meditation, and more especially notice any of them that the Spirit of God gives you as a Ground of Hope and Comfort in Straits; these may be useful to you in the subsequent Course of Life, as to David, when he pleads, *Remember the Word unto thy Servant upon which thou has caused me to hope: This is my Comfort in my Affliction, thy Word hath quickened me*, Psal. 119. 49, 50. 6th, Plead for the Performance of the Promise by Prayer both for the Church, your Friends, and your own particular Conditions; plead humbly, fervently, and with Faith and Sincerity; let the divine Word of Promise furnish you with Arguments, and support your Souls with holy Confidence in all your Addresses to the Throne. 7th, Wait on the Lord for the Accomplishment of the Promise, like old Simeon, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, Luke 2. 25. Tho' the Lord will surely perform his good Word, yet perhaps not in such a time and way as you propose, you must not limit God to your Methods, but be satisfied with what he sees best for his own Glory, and your Good, as a Servant waits for his Master's Pleasure, so should ye wait patiently on the Lord in the way of Duty. 8th, Improve what Promises the Lord hath given for promoting Holiness, 2 Cor. 7. 1. Since God has testified his Respect to us in so ample a Way, we ought to evidence the just Sense we have of our Obligations to him, by a holy Conversation: For this End, we ought to make use of the Strength and Furniture stipulate to us in the Promises, and to esteem them as a singular Honour put upon us as Pledges of God's Love, and so solid Grounds to hope for an eternal Reward.

HEBREWS XII. Verse 27.

And this Word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken, may remain.

THIS Text is the Conclusion of the whole Argumentative Part of this Epistle: The Apostle having to the full proved the Excellency of the Gospel State of the Church, above that under the Law, and confirmed it by all the Circumstances of the one and the other, as ye have heard from the 18. and subsequent Verses; he comes now to declare, that all the ancient Institution of Worship, and the whole Church State of the old Covenant was now to be removed and taken away; and that to make way for a better and more glorious State, which should be subject to no after Alterations.

In the Words read, we have, 1. A Passage in the Prophetical Testimony, *Hag. 2. 6.* on which the Apostle grounds the Inference or Conclusion in the Text. 2ly. The Interpretation of this Passage.

As to the First, The Passage on *Hagga 2. 6.* on which he grounds this Inference, is, *Yet once more, which Imports, 1. That such a Work as is now spoken of, or of an alike Nature, had been done before, even the giving of the Law before described. 2ly, That the Lord would Work again more eminently by erecting a new Church State.*

Next, We have the Interpretation of this Passage, which contains the grand Design of the shaking mentioned in the preceding Verse, namely, 1. The removal of the things that were shaken, that is, of the Ceremonial Law, and the ancient Worship and Constitution of the Church of the Jews, the Reason whereof is added, *These are things that are made, they were made by the Hands of Men, so were the Ark, the Tabernacle, the Cherubims made by Bezaleel and Abdiab; and they were made only for a Season, Heb. 9. 10. To the time of the Reformation, and so might well be removed for the Establishment of the Tabernacle which God pitched and not Men. 2ly, In their Room is to be introduced the things which cannot be shaken: that is, the things of the spiritual Kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Gospel with all its Privileges, Worship and Ordinances, which are so established as to remain to the Consummation of all things; and that against all Opposition whatsoever. Wherefore as the Heavens and the Earth of the Idolatrous World were of old shaken and removed, so shall these also of the Antichristian World, which at present in many Places seem to prevail; all things must give Way to the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ.*

Having from some of the preceding Verses in this Chapter looked to that Doctrine, That the Dispensation under the Old Testament was Earthly, Dark and full of Turb, (See Observation 3. on Verses 18, 19, 20, 21.) Also, That our Condition under the New Testament

Testament is by far more Excellent than that of these who lived under the Old Testament Dispensation (see Observe 1. on Verse 22.) I shall from this Text only speak to this one

Observe, That as the Ceremonial Worship is shaken and removed, so the Gospel Dispensation and Worship now introduced can never be changed, but shall ever remain.

To prepare this for your Use, I shall, First, Premise some Considerations for clearing the Doctrine. Secondly, Prove, That the Ceremonial Worship is shaken and removed. Thirdly, That the Gospel Worship now introduced shall ever remain.

To return, the following Considerations may clear the Doctrine, and prevent Difficulties concerning it. First, That three Times are to be noticed for understanding the Obligation and Abrogation of the Ceremonial Law, 1. The Time in which it was alive and in Force; Namely, From the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, to the Time of the Reformation by the Death of Christ: In which Period Circumcision was a Seal of the Righteousness by Faith, Rom. 4. 11: 2. The second Time is that wherein the Ceremonies were dead and disannulled; Namely, From the Death of Christ till the Gospel was plentifully preached through the World, and Gospel Liberty thereby discovered: In this Period the Observation of the Law was indifferent; Yea, for sometime lawful for gaining the weak Jews, as is evident from Acts 15. 29: Rom. 14. 3. The third Time is that wherein the Observance of the Ceremonial Law is deadly and damnable, Gal. 5. 2: Behold, I Paul say unto you, That if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing: This Period extends from the full preaching of the Gospel to the End of the World.

2ly, Consider, That the Reason for putting an end to the Ceremonies, is the introducing a better Ministry, Heb. 8. 6: So as what is Perfect succeeds to what was Imperfect, as riper Years succeed to Childhood, as the clear Sun-shine to the dark Night and dawning Morning: Even so the Circumcision in the Spirit succeeds to that in the Flesh, and the Sacrifice of the Lamb of God, to the Sacrifices of Bulls and of Goats: Things shaken are removed, that the Things which cannot be shaken may remain. There is a disannulling of the Commandment going before, for its Unprofitableness, the End of it was Righteousness before God, which it could not give; But Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness to them that believe, the Law is but a Schoolmaster to lead to him; So then, when he is come, and the End of the Law fulfilled, it is inconsistent it should stand in an Obligatory Force to Obedience:

In the 2d. Place, It is evident, That the Ceremonial Worship is shaken and removed, if we consider, 1. That there was a time appointed for the Conversion & Calling of the Gentiles into the Church, as is evident from Isa. 49, 54, and 66. Chapters, Mal. 1. 11. and other Places, which is now actually accomplished since Christ's coming in the Flesh; But this could not be while the Ceremonial Law remained unshaken: All the Males from India, Europe and America, could not appear before the Lord thrice a Year at Jerusalem; What Temple? yea, what Land could contain them? Where should they have Bullocks for Burnt-offerings, or Altars for offering up the Sacrifice? But the Truth is, at that time Men may Pray everywhere, lifting up holy Hands, without wrath and doubting: And worship the Father, neither in this Mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, but in Spirit and in Truth, 1 Tim. 2. 8. John 4. 21, 23: 2ly, The Lord promised to make a new Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah: Not according to the Covenant which he made with their Fathers, when he brought them out of the Land of Egypt, Jerem. 31. 31, 32. Where the Lord clearly intimates that he would change that Covenant made on Mount Sinai, with the Ordinances and Ceremonies thereof, and bring in a better Covenant, the former being faulty, and not able to Perfect or Consummate the Church. 3ly, There are

many other Discoveries, even in the Old Testament, that the Ceremonial Law was to be shaken and removed in the Days of the Gospel: As, that the *Messias* shall cause the Sacrifice and daily Oblation to cease, Dan. 9. 27. The Lord in many Places signifies his Displeasure with legal Sacrifices, as *Hosea* 6. 6. *Psalms* 50, and 51. and *Isaiah* Chapter first, Yea, in *Ezek.* 20. 35. he says, I gave them Statutes that were not good, and Judgments whereby they should not live. He Prophesies, That the Days shall come when they shall say no more, The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more, Jer. 3. 16. Incense and a pure Offering shall be offered to the Lord, from the rising of the Sun, even to the going down of the same, Mal. 1. 11. Priests shall be chosen from among the Gentiles, Isa. 66. 21. And there shall be an Altar to the Lord in the midst of the Land of Egypt, Isa. 19. 19. All which are Inconsistent with the standing of the Ceremonial Law, and plainly tell it was to be shaken and removed. Finally, The Lord promised to set up a Priest for ever after the Order of *Melchizedek*, Psal. 110. 4. without any Successor. Now, seeing the Priesthood is changed, there is a Necessity of changing the Law; Because the whole Administration of the Law concerning the Expiation of Sin by Sacrifices, and the Worship in the Temple and Tabernacle depended on the *Aaronical Priesthood*, and was confined thereto. 4ly, As the Old Testament makes it evident, That the Ceremonial Law was to be removed, so the New Testament puts it beyond all Dispute, that it is now actually disannulled and removed. It is really and virtually Abrogate by the Death of Christ, Coloss. 2. 14. Blotting out the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Cross. At his Death the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, to signify these dark Ceremonies to be done away, which put a Difference betwixt Jew and Gentile. He has broken down the middle Wall of Partition betwixt us, having abolished in his Flesh the Enmity, even the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances, Ephes. 2. 14, 15. The Apostle illustrates this by a Similitude, *Romans* Chapter 7th, while the Husband is alive, the Wife is obliged to Conjugal Duties to him, and to him alone, but upon his Death the Obligation ceaseth: So were we obliged to obey the Law while it remained in full Force and Vigour, but when through the Death of Christ the Law is Accomplished and Dead, its Preceptive Part Fulfilled, and its Significative Exhibited, it is of no Force nor Efficacy as a Law. And as it was Abrogate Really by the Death of Christ, so Declaratively by the preaching of the Gospel, declaring the *Messias* was come, had made an end of Sin, and brought in everlasting Righteousness, by the Institution and Introduction of new spiritual Gospel Ordinances, inconsistent with the Ceremonies, by the Decree of the first general Synod, *Acts* 15. Why tempt ye God, to put a Yoke upon the necks of the Disciples, which neither our Fathers nor we were able to bear, verse 10. It seemed good to the holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, verse 28. And by the Apostles subsequent Doctrine agreeable thereto, *Galat.* 5. 1: Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage. I proceed.

In the third Place to prove, That the Gospel Dispensation and Worship shall ever remain; It is then evident that Gospel Ordinances must continue to the last Day, Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13. He gave some, Apostles: and some, Prophets: and some, Evangelists: and some, Pastors and Teachers; For the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ: It

is also evident that the Sacraments shall continue, *Matth. 28. 19, 20. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the World, 1 Cor. 11. 26. As oft as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* The Enemies of the Church may sometimes triumph; *Dioclesian and Maximinus persecuting Tyrants, raised to themselves triumphal Arches, with Inscriptions importing, They had destroyed the Name of the Christians, and razed their Superstition:* Yet it has now Out-lived them thirteen hundred Years and upwards, *And the gates of Hell shall never prevail against it, Matth. 16. 18.* True it is, the Church may be sometimes brought low, *The Witnesses prophesying in Sackcloth, the Women hid in the Wilderness, Revel. Chap. 11, 12.* Yet Christ's Kingdom shall never be destroyed, *but it shall break in pieces and consume all kingdoms, but it shall stand for ever, Dan. 2. 44:* The Kingdom of Antichrist, and whatever stands in Opposition to the Church of Christ, shall be removed and taken out of the way, and the Lord shall yet have a more glorious Church in the World. If the Lord made way for the Gospel, by the Removal of his own Institution, which he appointed for a Season, what else shall hinder its Establishment and happy Progress to the End?

Inference, *Is the Ceremonial Worship shaken and removed, but the Dispensation and Worship introduced by the Gospel shall never be changed?* Thence take these Words of Exhortation, 1. Let us bless the Lord for this rich Dispensation of Gospel Ordinances we now enjoy. The Ceremonies were but Dark, Earthly and Uncomfortable, a burdensome and uneasy Service; But the Gospel Worship is more Plain, Easy, Spiritual, Sweet and Comfortable, with a more liberal Effusion of the Spirit of Grace poured out upon the Church in all Ages of the World. *Many Prophets and Kings have desired to see these Things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear these Things which ye hear, and have not heard them, Luke 10. 24.* The Patriarch Abraham desired to see Christ's Day, and he saw it and was glad, *John 8. 56.* If the Prospect of this Day afforded them such Joy at so great Distance, how should we rejoyce in the Enjoyment of it? 2ly, Take heed how ye hear this precious Gospel, *Luke 8. 18.* I assure you, few hear as they ought to do, many are Barren, Useless, Wandering and unprofitable Hearers; you have many Enemies to Oppose and Impediments to hinder you in Hearing, from Sin, Satan, the Plagues of your own Hearts, and the World; its Crosses and Comforts, Afflictions and Allurements: Where the Danger and Difficulty is great, there is Reason to take heed. The Gospel, as it is right or wrong heard, is the greatest Mercy, or the greatest Judgment; It is a favour of Death unto Death, or of Life unto Life, *2 Cor. 2. 16.* It is of your Souls eternal Concern, Hearing is Provision for another World, for Salvation comes by Faith, and Faith by hearing the Gospel, the Word of the living God, by which ye will be judged at the last Day, *Rom. 2. 16:* 3ly, Beware of these Things that hinder the Gospel's getting Access to your Souls, as, of Ignorance, of Unbelief, it binds up the Hands of a Saviour, *Matth. 13. 58.* Beware of a selfish proud Heart, that cannot stoop to renounce Self-righteousness, guard against Custom in Sinning, and presuming your State to be safe already, like the *Laodiceans, Revel. 3. 17.* And beware of Prejudices at Religion, and the strict Duties of Holiness: If ye be not on your Guard against these, ye will ruin your Souls. 4ly, Put it to the Trial, what Success the Gospel has had on your Souls, Are your Eyes open to see Sin in its Vileness, and Christ in his Glory, Streakedness, and matchless Excellency? Has your Hearts yet been made by Conviction, so as to loath your selves in dust and ashes? Have ye a Heart-hatred against every Sin? Are ye cheerfully willing

willing to take Christ and his Cross, to submit to the Yoke of his Obedience, *Matth. 16. 24. Chap. 1. 29.* And are ye willing to accept of your Saviour never to part with him? If it be thus, ye have Ground to conclude the Gospel has had some abiding Success on your Souls. 5ly, Shall the Gospel Dispensation ever remain? then this may afford Consolation to the People of God, amidst all Commotions that may threaten the Church, *The gates of Hell shall never prevail against it*; It is true, God may forsake and punish particular Churches for their Sin, and we may fear this; But to his second Coming he shall always have a pure Church, wherein Gospel Liberty and Worship shall be preserved, *Christ's Kingdom shall break in pieces other kingdoms, but it shall never be destroyed.* We have already a great Pledge of his Faithfulness, in performing the Promises of greatest Concern to us, in sending Christ to the World in the fulness of time, in shaking and pulling down the Ceremonial Worship, in calling the Church of the Gentiles, and us among others, and in giving us pure Gospel Ordinances; And we have sufficient Ground to expect the Performance of what he has further promised, *That these things that cannot be shaken shall remain.* 6ly, Shall the Gospel Dispensation and Worship ever remain? then *stand fast in your Liberty, and be not again entangled with a Yoke of Bondage.* We in this Land (blessed be God) have a pure Gospel Church, the Ordinances Spiritual, the Worship Pure, and the Government free from humane Inventions, and Additions imposed on other Churches; Let us maintain our Gospel Liberty, Expect, Pray, and Hope, that it may ever remain; Let us not be deceived with a voluntary Humility, with humane Inventions in God's Service, as Cringings, Bowings, Crossings, Surplices, Altars, Liturgies, and the like Ceremonies: But let us own and maintain what God has wrought for us, let us accept of the Offers of Christ in the Gospel, serve him *in Spirit and in Truth*, and have a Conversation that may be an Ornament to our Profession.

HEBREWS XII. Verse, 28.

Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved; Let us have Grace, whereby we may serve GOD acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear.

THE Apostle is now about to sum up both the Doctrinal and Hortatory Part of this Epistle. What he has demonstrate by many Arguments of the Preeminence of the Gospel State of the Church, above that under the Law, he now makes use of as a Reason to press that Obedience and Constancy he exhorts to.

In the Words read you have, *First*, Their Dependance on the former, in the Illative Particle, *Wherefore*. *Secondly*, A high Dignifying Privilege of Gospel Believers, *We receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved.* *Thirdly*, A Duty pressed in Consideration thereof,

thereof, which is to serve God acceptably, described from, 1. The Means of it, *Let us have Grace.* 2. The Manner of its Performance, *With Reverence and godly Fear.*

I return to the First, The Note of Inference, *Wherefore*, which may have a Respect either to the whole foregoing Discourse, or that immediately preceeding concerning the shaking and Removal of the Judaical Church-State, with the Introduction and Establishment of the Kingdom of Christ; the Force of the Exhortation ariseth equally from either of them, seeing the State of Believers under the Gospel is so Glorious and Excellent as already described, *Let us have Grace to serve him acceptably.* Before we proceed further hence, take this

Observe, *That the Nature, Use and End of all Divine Truths is to be improved, applied and reduced to Practice:* And this may be demonstrate by these Reasons, 1. Faith and Obedience is the End of their Revelation, without which they are of no Use. 2^{ly}, If they be not improved, they will never be operative on our Heart and Life. 3^{ly}, To detain them within the Compass of meer Speculation, is to overthrow both their Nature and Use. 4^{ly}, If they be not reduced to Practice, they will serve to lighten our Condemnation, to make us more inexcusable, because we abused so clear Light and such choice Gospel Opportunities: Therefore *let us not be hearers only, but also doers of his holy Will.* It may be asked, How shall we improve and reduce to Practice Divine Truths? Answer 1: Believingly from a solid Persuasion of the Truth of them. 2^{ly}, Presently without any Delay, if Satan once perswade you to delay present Duty a little, he will drive it further till ye put it off altogether. 3^{ly}, Affectionately, giving Truths the chief Room in your Hearts, laying aside all Prejudice against them. 4^{ly}, Impartially, without shifting any Truth because it strikes at the Root of some beloved Idol; not putting it off with Excuses, nor conniving at any Sin. 5^{ly}, With ejaculatory Desires in time of hearing, having particularly applied it to your own Soul, you look to God that he may make it effectual for your Good. 6^{ly}, With fervent Prayer when got alone in your Closet; you commit to God a keeping, that he may make it useful to you in the after Course of your Life: The Lord sometimes makes Truths heard many Years ago, as fresh, savory and useful to his People, as these they have heard Yesterday.

The next thing in the Text is the Privileges asserted, *We receiving a Kingdom that cannot be moved.* Where consider, 1. The Nature of this Privilege, it is a Kingdom, an heavenly spiritual State, under the Rule of Jesus Christ, whom God has anointed to be his King over his holy Hill of Zion. The Kingly Office of Christ and his Kingdom were the common Faith of the Church of the Old Testament and of the New, *Isa. 9. 7. Luke 1. 33.* This Kingdom is usually distinguished into the Kingdom of Grace, and the Kingdom of Glory; but the first seems to be principally intended in this Text, even Christ's Rule in and over the Gospel-State of the Church, which the Apostle has proved to be more Excellent than that of the Law; to this belong Gospel Privileges, of which Believers are Partakers. 2^{ly}, The property of this Privilege *αταλυστον*, a Kingdom that cannot be shaken or moved. All other Kingdoms may be moved and changed, but this only is immoveable; no Dominion ever so dreamed of Eternity as the Roman Empire, but it has not only been shaken, but broken in Pieces as Chaff before the Wind: But no external Opposition shall shake this Kingdom, *Dan. 7. 14. 27. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, Matth. 16. 18.* No internal Decays shall ruin it, the Spring of it is in him, who lives for ever, and who has the Keys of Hell and Death. But that which is here peculiarly intended, is, that it is not obnoxious to such shaking and Removal as the

the Church State was under the Old Testament, God himself will never make any Alteration in it, nor ever introduce another Church State or Worship, he has put the last Hand, the Hand of his only Son unto all Revelations and Institutions. 3ly, The way of Believers Participation of this Privilege, of this Kingdom, *We receiving*, as the Apostle had before joined himself with them in the Threatning, *How shall we escape?* Verse 25. so does he here in the Privilege, *We receiving*, you and I, and all Believers, get a Right to this Kingdom by Donation from the Father, by accepting of Christ by true and lively Faith, and complying with the Doctrine and Law of the Gospel. Hence

Observe, *That as our Lord Christ has a spiritual immoveable Kingdom, so Believers receive a Right to it with all its Privileges.*

To prepare this for your Use, I shall, 1. Shew what are the Ensigns, the Regalia of this Kingdom. 2. Who are the Subjects of this Kingdom. 3. The Properties of it. 4. How Believers receive a Right to it. 5. View its Privileges.

I begin with the First, The Ensigns, the Regalia of this Kingdom, which shew our Lord to be really invested with a Kingly Power; as 1. He has a Throne, Isa. 6. 1. Psal. 45. 6. He has a Throne of Justice for his Enemies, and a Throne of Grace to which his People may come boldly, Heb. 4. 16. expecting to partake of the Fruits of our Redeemer's Purchase and Intercession, Pity suitable to our Misery, Pardon for our guilty Souls, and Relief under all our Afflictions. And he has a Throne of Glory, of which he says, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.* Rev. 3. 21. 2ly, He has a Scepter, Psal. 45. 6. *The Scepter of thy Kingdom is a right Scepter*; He governs with great Equity, he administers Justice equally to all his Subjects, he Rules outwardly by his Word, and inwardly by his Spirit, the Finger and Arm of the Lord; his efficacious Work cannot be resisted, these who will not bow to him, he will break them in Pieces. 3ly, There are Laws in this Kingdom which are holy, just and good, Rom. 7. 12. It is Holy as it teaches us our Duty to God; Just, as it sheweth our Duty to our Neighbour; and Good, as it works Goodness in the Observer of it, and guides to temporal and eternal Happiness: These Laws are agreeable to the Law of Nature, tho' they far transcend any thing corrupt blinded Nature can teach; they are written in the holy Scriptures, and the Lord will engrave them on the Hearts of all true Believers. 4ly, In this Kingdom there are Office-bearers, Eph. 4. 11, 12. *And he gave some, Apostles: some, Prophets: some, Evangelists: and some Pastors and Teachers; For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.* Magistrates are nursing Fathers to the Church when in their Duty, but not properly Church Officers; but our Lord has settled Ministers of the Gospel to continue in his Church as his Office-bearers, for converting these who belong to the Election of Grace, and for edifying his Saints to the End of the World; Be perswaded then to receive the Food dispensed by these your spiritual Guides. 5ly, There are Courts in this Kingdom, there is the Court of Conscience, and happy is he who has its Approbation founded on solid Grounds, like the Apostle, 2 Cor. 1. 12. — *Our rejoicing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World.* There is a Court of Ecclesiastick Censures, Matth. 18. 15: — *If thy Brother trespass against thee, go tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every word may be established.*

And

And if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a Publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven. And there is the awful Tribunal of God's Judgment, before which we must all appear, to receive according to the things done in the Body, whether it be good or bad, 2 Cor. 5. 10. 6ly, There are Rewards and Punishments dispensed in this Kingdom, Tribulation and anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile, but Glory, Honour and Peace to every Man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: The wicked shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power, 2 Thess. 1. 9. but the Righteous shall receive the Reward of an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for them, 1 Pet. 1. 4. 7ly, Our Lord Jesus is solemnly called, anointed, prophesied, prefigured and crowned to be King of this Kingdom, he was called and anointed to this Office, Psal. 2. 6. I have set my King upon my holy Hill of Zion. He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with Power, Acts 10. 38. He was prophesied of in the Old Testament, Psal. 119, 132. Ezek. 34. 23, 24. He was typified by Melchisedec, Heb. 7. by David, Hos. 3. 5. Jer. 30. 9. and by Solomon, Matth. 12. 42. He was and is adorned with regal Titles, The Prince of Peace, Isa. 9. 6, 7. Our Judge and our Law-giver, Isa. 33. 12. The King of kings and Lord of lords, Rev. 19. 16. and, The Lord of Glory, 1 Cor. 2. 8. He has an essential Glory as God equal with the Father, and a mediatorial Glory for what he has done and suffered in our Room and in our Stead. He was proclaimed King at his Birth, Luke 1. 31, 32, 33, acknowledged at his Death, John 18. 33,—38: Chap. 19. 19. and more solemnly when he ascended into Heaven, Eph. 1. 20,—22. He was crowned when to die, with a Crown of Thorns, Matth. 27. 29. and when he sat down at the Father's right Hand, with a Crown of Glory and Honour, Heb. 2. 9. which he shall wear till all his Enemies be made his Footstool, and to all Eternity shall be the glorious Head of all the redeemed Company. Lastly, He has a great and large Dominion, Psal. 72. 8. a numerous Train of Subjects devoted to his Service. Which leads me to what I proposed

In the second Place, to give Account of the Subjects of this Kingdom. That you may better understand this Matter, it is to be noticed, That our Lord has, 1. A general Kingdom as he is the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father, the Head of all Principalities and Powers, reigning over all Creatures; and 2. A particular Kingdom, as he is Mediator reigning over the Church only.

With Respect to the First, His Kingdom ruleth over all, Psal. 103. 19. He is Heir of all things, Heb. 1. 2. and so he has many Subjects; as 1. The blessed Angels, they are Subject to him, and under his Feet, Eph. 1. 21, 22. They Adore and Worship him, Heb. 1. 6. they attend his Throne and sound his Praise, Isa. 6. 1, 2, 3. and well becomes them so to do, he is their God that made them, he instructs in deep Mysteries and bestows innumerable Benefits on them: They are employed daily in his Service, they are ministering Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation, Heb. 1. 14. Saints are more obliged to them than can be told. 2ly, To this general Kingdom even Devils are Subjects, he is not their Head, but he is Judge and Ruler over them. This Dominion is founded on the Prerogative of his divine Nature, and on his lawful Conquest, Col. 2. 15. He spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in the Cross. This Power he exerciseth, by keeping these fallen Angels in Chains under Darkness to the Judgment of the great Day, by hindering them from doing Hurt to his Church.

Church. *The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*; if at any time they be permitted to tempt his People, it shall be ordered for their good, he makes them Executioners of his Wrath against his incorrigible Foes; and at the last glorifies his Justice and Power by pouring out these Vials of Wrath reserved for the Devil and his Angels. 3ly, He has a sovereign Power even over the Reprobate, over the worst of Men, over all Flesh, *John 17. 2.* This Power he exerciseth in sparing the worst of Men to see if they will repent, in enduring with much long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted for Destruction, by giving them common Favours, filling their Hearts with Food and Gladness, he restrains their Sin, says, *Habero shall thou come and no further, here shall all thy proud Waves be stayed*; He overrules their Designs to other Designs than are by them intended, he inflicts just Judgments on them both in this Life, and in that which is to come; He will come in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel, who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction. 4ly, He has sovereign Power over all things, over the very irrational and inanimate Beings, *Psal. 8. 4. — 9.* The Friends of Christ need not fear the want of any thing needful for them, seeing their Lord and Husband our blessed Redeemer has all in his Power, if he see great things can be useful to them, he will give them, and in the mean time whatever he orders, shall be for their good. His supreme Dominion extends also over all political things. *He is King of kings and Lord of lords, Rev. 17. 14.* His Government is suitable to his Title, *By him Kings Reign, and Princes decree Justice*; He lifts up one, and puts down another at his Pleasure: His active Hand of Providence is like a Wheel in the middle of a Wheel, it is the Spring of all Transactions; he foretold by his Prophet *Daniel* the Rise and Period of the greatest Monarchies and Revolutions in the World. He can make Kings nursing Fathers to his Church, but if they be wicked Men and Tyrants, they shall one Day stand trembling before his awful Tribunal, crying to the Mountains and Rocks, *Fall on us and hide us from the Face of him that sits on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb, for great is the Day of his Wrath, and who shall be able to stand?* *Rev. 6. 15. — 17.*

Our Lord Jesus has also a particular Kingdom as Mediator reigning over the Church only, as to the Old Testament Church he institute and appointed it, *He was in the Church in the Wilderness, with the Angel that spake on Mount Sinai, Acts 7. 38.* He gave them his Laws, Statutes and Judgments, he purged and reformed that Church from Corruptions that had crept in amongst them; he at last unhinged the Pins of that Tabernacle, removed that Dispensation, which stood only in Meats and Drinks, and divers Washings imposed till the time of the Reformation, *Heb. 9. 10.* and so made Way for the New Testament Church, of which he is also the Head and Lord, it is built on him, *Eph. 2. 20. — 22.* He appointed its Officers, *Eph. 4. 11.* its Ordinances, *Matth. 28. 19, 20.* its Censures, *Matth. 18. 17.* He is the Substance and Scope of our preaching, *Acts 10. 43.* who blesseth and makes it fruitful, *1 Cor. 3. 7.* O that he might do so in this Place. And as our Lord has a particular Kingdom over his Church, so over his own Elect People, the Members of his invisible Church; there be some of these who are not yet converted; he has a Right to them as being gifted to him by the Father, as purchased by the dear Price of his own Blood, he has promised their Conversion, *John 10. 16.* He has appointed Means for that End, he prays for it, *John 17. 20.* and in his own good Time will effectuate it. O that many such all the World over, and in this Nation, in this City, and in this Congregation may be gained to Christ! But Believers who have accepted the Son of God offered in the Gospel, and are sanctified by his Spirit in their Hearts, our Lord has set up a Throne for himself, they receive the Choice of his

Gifts

Gifts and Graces, on them he bestows the special Privileges of the Kingdom, of which afterward. I proceed,

Thirdly, To shew what are the Properties of this Kingdom; and 1. It is Spiritual, John 18. 36. *My Kingdom is not of this World.* True it is, the Jews dreamed of an Earthly Kingdom, but the Scepter was departed from Judah when the Messiah came, Gen. 49. 10. the Old Testament it self declares the Messiah was to be a *Man of Sorrows*, and acquainted with Griefs, Isa. 53. to come meek and lowly, riding upon an *Ass*, Zech. 9. 9. The Means of his Government are Spiritual, his Ordinances, Word and Sacraments blessed by his Spirit, Isa. 2. 3. Chap. 61. 1, 2. Psal. 110. 2, 3. and the Effects of it are Spiritual, to make an end of Sin, to bring in everlasting Righteousness, Dan. 9. 24. to justify many, Isa. 53. 11. to deliver his People from Death and the Grave, Hos. 13. 14. 2ly, This Kingdom is everlasting, Dan. 7. 14. Other Kingdoms and Monarchies had their fatal Period, but this outlives them all. 3ly, It is large and universal, King Jesus is the same in all Ages, Yesterday, to Day, and for ever, Heb. 13. 8. All Men are subject to him, High and Low, Rich and Poor, Dan. 7. 14. Rev. 17. 14. and he can make use of all Creatures as he pleaseth, for his Glory, and the good of his Church. 4ly, It is a peaceable Kingdom, our Lord is the Prince of Peace, Isa. 9. 6. He is the Purchaser of Peace betwixt offending Sinners and the Justice of God infinitely offended, he bestows Peace of Conscience and preserves the same, he exhorts his People to be at Peace with all Men, and leads in to eternal Peace. 5ly, An immoveable Kingdom, it is founded on the Rock of Ages, no Power of Men, nor of Devils can shake it; its Ordinances, Sacraments and Constitutions can never be removed, as has been illustrate on the preceeding Verse; no internal Decay can ruin it, the Spring of it is in him who lives for ever: When Saints pass from the Kingdom of Grace, they enter into the Kingdom of Glory, where they shall be ever with the Lord.

In the fourth Place, I come to shew how Believers receive a Right to this Kingdom; 1. By Donation from the Father, Luke 12. 32. *Fear not, little Flock; for it is your Fathers good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* It is at his Disposal, and he freely bequeaths it upon them. 2ly, They receive its Doctrine and Law, owning its Truth, and submitting to its Authority, *They obey from the Heart the form of Doctrine which is delivered to them*, Rom. 6. 17. 3ly, They receive it by being initiate in the sacred Mysteries of it, receiving the Sacraments as sacred Seals of all the Privileges of the Kingdom, having Access to God in all the spiritual Duties and Ordinances of his own Appointment; Believers get far greater Advantages by Preaching, Meditation, Prayer, Praise, Reading and Self-searching, than Strangers to Christ; they have Communion with God in these Duties, they see him who is invisible, they feed on the Promises, and draw spiritual Nourishment from Christ, which Strangers cannot do. 4ly, Believers renounce all foreign Jurisdiction, Isa. 26. 13. *O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had Dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy Name.* They disown Sin, Satan, the World, and the Lusts of the Flesh, they abandon and fight against these as the irreconcilable Enemies of their Soul, and will never lay down their Arms till in the End, through Grace assisting them, they gain a compleat Victory. Believers, you have Covenanted against these who are Christ's Enemies and yours in Baptism, and under his Banner you must renew and stand by your Engagements, which if ye do, be persuaded, as our Lord has obtained, so shall ye gain a compleat Victory. 5ly, Believers give Christ the Throne in their Hearts, they dedicate their Souls and all they have or can pretend to, to be his, at his Service and Disposal: Your Understanding, that he may

enlighten

enlighten it; your Will, that it may be subject to his Laws; your Conscience, that it may impartially challenge you for Sin; your Affections, that our Redeemer may be yours, *thy well Beloved*, that Sin may be the chief Object of your Hatred; that you may desire for, and rejoice in Communion with *the King of Glory*, that *your Members may be Servants to Righteousness unto Holiness*, your Tongue to speak forth his Praise, your Hands to act, and your Feet to move in his Way; your Children to be redeemed by his Blood; your Time, your Estates, your Lives to be at his Disposal, for his Service and Glory. *6th*, Believers swear Allegiance to the King of Glory, they accept of him for *Righteousness and Strength, for Wisdom, Sanctification and Redemption*: They Promise, through Assistance of his Grace, to obey his Laws, to fight against his Enemies, and cheerfully to Worship and Serve him in every commanded Duty; they *nail their Ears to the Posts of his Doors*, in Token they are well pleased with their Master, and resolved never to forsake his Service. *7th*, Believers receive the Kingdom in the spiritual Benefits of it, it is a Kingdom whose Treasures and Revenues consist in Light, Liberty, Righteousness, Peace, Grace and Mercy, *Rom. 14. 17. The Kingdom of God is Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*: All these they receive in Right, Title and Possession, according to the various Measures of Grace bestowed on them. *Lastly*, Believers receive the Kingdom in the Privileges of it, which leads me,

In the fifth Place, To give you a View of the Privileges of this Kingdom which Believers receive. Our Lord Jesus the only Prince and Monarch of this Kingdom, the Lord and Husband of his own People, has bestowed many Privileges upon them; as
1. He makes them *willing by a Day of his Power*, *Psal. 110. 3*. He persuades them to submit to himself, sometimes by awaking Conversions, discovering their miserable Estate suitable to all their Wants, so as they desire earnestly an Interest in him in whom alone they can be Happy. *2ly*, He subdues their Lusts and Corruptions, he makes *his Arrows sharp in the Hearts of his Enemies*, *Psal. 45. 5*. He can give you Victory over your Pride, Passion, and every predominant Idol; He made a persecuting *Saul* to be a preaching *Paul*, an idolatrous bloody *Manasseh* to be a humble praying Penitent; and will give thee Victory over any Sin that is too strong for thee, if thou in Sincerity ask it of him. *3ly*, He distributes special Gifts to his chosen People suitable to the State of a King; a King on his Coronation Day will scatter Medals and precious Things among the Crowd; but our King Jesus will give to every one who give him the Throne in their Hearts, and swear Allegiance to him, Gifts and Graces, *He will pardon all your Iniquities, and heal all your Diseases, and crown you with loving Kindness*. *4ly*, Our Lord is not only our King, but comes under many other comfortable Relations to his own People, he is our Father to protect and defend us, our Husband to love, nourish and cherish us, our Brother for intimate Familiarity, and our Friend to stand by us in a Day of Adversity. *5ly*, In this Kingdom Believers are entertained with a rich Feast, *Isa. 25. 6. In this Mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all People a Feast of fat Things, a Feast of Wines on the Lees, of fat things full of Marrow, of Wines on the Lees well refined*. Christ is the Maker and the Matter of the Feast, you feed on his Promises, on his Purchase, on the Influences of his Grace, and the Merits of his Intercession. *6ly*, Our Lord calms Disorders and Confusions raised in the Soul, and creates Peace, *Isa. 26. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace whose Mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee*. Himself is the Prince of Peace, his Subjects are a peaceable People, following Peace with all Men; if Sin the grand Enemy raise Tumults; by flying to the Blood of Sprinkling Peace will be restored, which shall terminate in eternal Tranquility, without the least Cloud of Confusion

Confusion or Disorder for ever. 7ly, In this Kingdom all Believers, all true Subjects are Kings, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Rev. 1. 6. They are all Heaven-born, of a high Extract, of a royal Disposition, undervaluing earthly Trifles, fixing their Hearts on eternal Joye, nobly attended, Angels are ministering Spirits to them, they feed on the hidden Manna, better than royal Dainties, are clothed with Princely Robes of Christ's Righteousness, are more Victorious than Kings over Sin, Satan, the World and Death; yea prevail with God, Gen. 32. 28. They are all Expectants, and in due time shall be possessed of the Kingdom of Glory, where they shall reign for ever, with Crowns on their Heads, and Palms in their Hands. 8ly, All the Power our Sovereign has is for the good of his Saints, does he reign over blessed Angels? He makes them ministering Spirits to the Heirs of Glory: Does he rule over Devils? He keeps them in Chains from tempting his Saints but as he pleases to permit; Is he Heir of all things? He makes all things work for good to his People, Rom. 8. 28. He will make the greatest Enemies of his Church, even Mahomet and Antichrist fall; He will overturn the Kingdoms of the World, to make Way for enlarging his Kingdom which cannot be moved. 9ly, In this Kingdom Believers get Salvation, Zech. 9. 9: to be delivered from temporal Enemies, and them that hate us, from spiritual Enemies, Sin, Satan, the World, Hell, Death and the Grave: All these our Lord has overcome, and assigns us a Right to his Victory; yea not only do ye receive Freedom from Evil, but also a Salvation that brings you to the Possession of every thing that is good, Peace, Pardon, Reconciliation, temporal, spiritual and eternal Mercies, Tokens of our Lord's Favour, Hearing of Prayer, Help in time of Need, Liberty to pour out our Complaints before him, and fill our Mouths with Arguments, Assurance of his Love and unspeakable Joy in his Presence. Lastly, Our King Jesus will raise up all Believers at the last Day, This corruptible shall put on Incorruption, and this Mortal put on Immortality, our Bodies be made like his glorious Body, and we receive a Kingdom of Glory, we shall dwell in the same House with Christ, our Souls and Bodies shall be like his, and shall inherit that Happiness which neither Heart can conceive, nor Tongue can express.

Use, Is it so, That as our Lord Christ has a spiritual immoveable Kingdom, so Believers receive a Right to it, with all its Privileges? Then let me exhort you to seek for a saving Right to this Kingdom, that the Kingdom of God may be within you, Luke 17. 21. that Christ may set up a Kingly Government in your Soul, Grace swaying its Scepter over the Will and Affections, bringing the whole Man in Subjection, subduing mutinous Lusts, and keeping the Soul in a divine Disposition. To this End, cry aloud to God by fervent Prayer to bring you out of the Kingdom of Darkness, in to the Kingdom of his own dear Son; renounce your Idols, give Christ the Throne in your Hearts, accept of him as offered in the Gospel, and swear Allegiance to him. Let me press you to this great Duty by a few Arguments, 1. Till ye gain a saving Interest in this Kingdom, ye are not within the Covenant of Grace which is lined with Love, and garnished with precious Promises; Grace is our Charter, by virtue whereof God makes himself over to us to be our God: The well ordered Covenant to a Soul in a State of Nature is a Paradise with a flaming Sword at the Door, to seclude their Entrance. 2ly, Till then, your purest Services are defiled, yea rejected of God, Prov. 15. 8. 3ly, Till then you are loathsome in God's Eye, Zech. 11. 8. Sin transforms Men to Devils, John 6. 70. If ever you obtain Repentance, you will loath your selves, Ezek. 20. 43. 4ly, Till then, you are illegitimate, of the Bastard Brood of the old Serpent, John 8. 44. and so you are interdicted from the Inheritance, Dem. 23. 2. 5ly, Till then, the Kingdom of Satan is set up in you, you are under his Power, Acts 26. 18. Led Captive by him at his will,

2 Tim. 2. 26. Your Hearts are the Devil's Mansion-house, *Matth. 12: 44.* You are the Power of Darkness, *Col. 1. 13.* So dark that ye know not whither ye go, yet the Devil is fast driving you to the Pit of Perdition, where *Blackness and Darkness* is reserved for you for ever; who would desire to stay in a dark tormenting Dungeon? O sensible of thy dark damned Estate, and go to Christ to Enlighten thee. 6ly, Till ye get a Right to this Kingdom of Grace, you ly exposed to the Wrath of God, and know the Power of his Anger? *Psal. 90. 11.* If a Spark of it falling on a Man's Conscience be so terrible, what will it be when he stirs up all his Wrath at once? 7ly, Till then ye cannot die in Peace, and with Comfort: O sad to have the King of Terrors engage with, and no Right to the Kingdom of Grace! It is a Wonder what you are doing, Hell follows Death at the Heels, *Revel. 6. 8.* I looked, and behold, a pale Horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed him. If ye would be free of the second Death, secure a Right to the Kingdom of Grace. 8ly, Which if ye secure your selves, ye shall get all these Privileges of the Kingdom above-discoursed of; Ye Entrance to the Kingdom of Glory, where you shall reign with the Lord as Kings reigning in Triumph, *With Crowns on your Heads, and Palms in your Hands, singing Songs of Praise to God, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

This Doctrine may also exhort you to Pray for the Enlargement of Christ's Kingdom by the Calling in of the Out-cast *Jews*, and the Fulness of the *Gentile Nations*, promised *Rom. Chap. 11.* 2 Cor. 3. 15, 16. By the Ruin of his incorrigible Enemies, as *Antichrist* and *Mahomet*, by reviving a Work of Reformation among Protestant Churches, delivering some of them from persecuting Oppressors, and making Grace and Holiness flourish among all Sorts of Persons. Are ye Disciples of Christ? Pray that his Kingdom may come *Matth. 6. 10.* Are ye Sons of Zion? Lift up a Prayer for your Mother Church, is it not pity Satan should have such large Territories, our Lord but so little a Flock? There is Ground to Hope the Church shall be more Conspicuous and Glorious, *The Mountain of the House of the Lord established on the Top of the Mountains, and many People flowing to Cry aloud for this Day, the Vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come and not tarry.*

I might here have spoken of the Kingdom of Glory; but having discoursed of the glorified State on Verse 23. I here pass it, and come to the next thing in the Text which is a Duty pressed from Consideration of former Privileges, *Let us have Grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear.* Where consider 1. The Duty exhorted to, that we would serve God acceptably, the Original Word *diakoneo* signifies that Service done to God which consists in his Worship, *Luke 2. 37. Acts 7. Rom. 1. 9, 25.* It is here expressive of that Worship of God according to the Gospel which was brought in on the Removal of these Institutions under the legal Oeconomy; hence it is added, that we would serve God acceptably, *ἀπορως*, with Respect to both Person and Service, it must be well pleasing to God, and accepted of him, 2 Cor. 5. Eph. 5. 10. Phil. 4. 18. There may be a Performance of Duties, when neither the Persons that perform them, nor the Duties themselves are accepted of God, so was it with *Cain* and his Sacrifice, and so is it always with Hypocrites: But if we would serve God acceptably, our Persons must be first justified through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, and next our Duties must be performed in the Exercise of Faith, Love, Reverence and holy Fear. 2ly, In Order to perform acceptable Service, it is necessary we have Grace; Grace here may be taken in a double Sense, either for the Grace or Favour of God in Christ the Spring of all Mercy, or for the internal sanctifying and assisting

Grace of God: Thus the word *χρησταις* signifies either to Retain and Hold fast, or to Obtain and Improve. Either the first Being and Essence of Grace in its Sanctifying Nature, by which the Soul is renewed after the Image of God; Or, *Assisting Grace*, by which the Soul is helped to serve God Acceptably, and live by Faith on him; Or, the continual Exercise of Grace, advancing and growing in Degrees and Measures of it: None of these we may exclude here, but the last seems chiefly designed. 3ly, The Manner of performing the Duty exhorted to, is, With Reverence and godly Fear, *μετὰ φόβου καὶ δεισιμασύνης*, these words are not any where else in Scripture used together, concerning the Worship of God, *αὐδω* signifies Shamefacedness and Modesty, *δεισιμασία* is sometimes used for Fear, without respect to Religion, Acts 23. 10. sometimes for Religious or Devout, without respect to Fear, Luke 2. 25. Reverence and godly Fear are here prescribed as contrary unto some Defects and Faults in Divine Worship, from which we ought to be deterred by the Consideration of the Holiness and Severity of God, as from want of a due Sense of his Majesty and Glory with whom we have to do; From want of a due Sense of our own Vileness and infinit Distance from him in Nature and Condition; And from carnal Boldness in a customary Performance of Sacred Duties, under a Neglect of endeavouring the Exercise of Grace in them which God abhors. To prevent these and the like Evils, these Graces are here prescribed.

These Words being thus Explained, I resolve them into these Doctrinal Propositions.

Observe 1. That rare Privileges call for, and should excite to acceptable Discharge of Duties. This is evident from the Apostle's Inference.

Obf. 2. That to serve God is the Upraking-work of a Christian, and to do it Acceptably, will be his Care. This arises from the Duty exhorted to.

Obf. 3. That Grace is the living Spring and Principle of all acceptable Service done to the great God, or it is indispensibly Necessary thereto.

Obf. 4. We are not only to look to the Matter of our Service, that it be such as he has enjoined; But especially to the Manner of it, that it be done with Reverence and godly Fear. I return to

Observe 1. That rare Privileges call for, and should be strong Excitements to laborious and painful Discharge of spiritual and holy Duties, 2 Cor. 7. 1. Having therefore these Promises, (dearly beloved) let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God. The Prospect of a Kingdom should quicken our Obedience: Moses had Respect to the Recompence of Reward, Heb. 11. 26. The Lord allows his People to press toward the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus, Phil. 3. 14. The Privileges God allows on his People, are singular Encouragements and Supports under Straits and Difficulties, Luke 12. 32. 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. They are Motives to Praise and Thanksgiving, Coloss. 1. 12. and they stir up to cheerful and vigorous Diligence in God's Service, 1 Cor. 14. 58. Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye Steadfast, Unmovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord. That Doctrine that cuts off these spiritual and excellent Considerations from Religion, making them Selfish and Sinful, is most Injurious to the Gospel and to the Souls of Men; for it runs cross to the Strain of the Gospel which commands us to strive for the Kingdom, to wrestle as in an agony, it blames that in Saints which the Scripture notices, as their Excellency, as Moses having respect to the recompence of Reward. It makes the Laws of Christianity to contradict the very Fundamental Law of our Creation, which inclines and obliges all Men to intend and design their own Happiness.

Happiness. And it unreasonably supposes a Man may not do that for his own Soul which he daily does, and is obliged to do for the Souls of others; Namely, to Pray, Exhort, and Reprove for their Salvation. I proceed to

Observ. 2. *That to serve God is the Upraking-work of a Christian, and to do it Acceptably will be his Care.* It is our Honour to be Servants to such a Master, he requires and expects it at our Hands.

To prepare this Doctrine for your Use, I shall, *First*, Shew what kind of Service we are to give him. *Secondly*, What is the Gain redounding from this Service. *Thirdly*, Why we should take care to serve him Acceptably.

As to the *First*, The Service we are to give to the Lord is, 1. Difficult and hard Service, and that either if you look to its Beginning, which is frequently attended with awakning Convictions, great Fears of Wrath, deep Sorrows for Sins of the bygone Life, humble, loathing and Self-Abasement, penitent Confessions, earnest Prayers, renouncing of Self-righteousness, and accepting of the Righteousness of Christ: Or if you look to the Progress of a Christian in the Way of Holiness, he must *bear the burden in the heat of the day, take the Kingdom of Heaven by Force and Violence, run so as to obtain, fight against Sin, resisting to the Blood, plough up the fallow ground of his Heart, hold a slaughter Weapon still in his Hand to kill his Idols, cutting off these Sins that are like Right Hands, and plucking out these that are like Right Eyes; and standing as Centinel continually on his Watch-tower, ready to oppose his Spiritual Enemies.* 2. It is honourable Service, a Servant to such a Master is an Epithet transcends the highest Titles of Honour in any Court of the World. *Moses my Servant is dead,* was a glorious Epitaph God wrote on that honourable Person; with blessed Angels we do his Commands, and *we are made Kings and Priests to our God.* 3. It is pleasant Service, *Prov. 3. 17. Wisdom's Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.* There is a Divine Sweetness felt in it, which makes them *Run and not Weary, Walk and not Faint, and mount up with Wings as Eagles.* 4. It is profitable Service, *Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8.* 5. It is constant Service, you *pay your Ears to the Posts of his Doors,* in Token that you are well pleased with your Master and his Service, and will never quite it. Believers are such Servants as are also *Sons who abide in the House for ever.* 6. It is sincere Service, not only in the Eyes of the World, but in the whole of our Practice, minding *that God seeth me,* designing singly his Glory and not our own Esteem, *Walking before the Lord in Truth, and with a perfect Heart,* which will afford Joy in Sicknels and at a dying Hour, *Isa. 38. 3.* 7. Fervent and devout Service, the Lord will not be pleased with Lip-labour, nor with meer external Performances, but requires his People to *be fervent in Spirit, serving him.* And to Encourage them to it, I shall discover

In the second Place, That there is great Gain redounding from this Service; For, 1. While his Servants are in the Out-field of the World at his Work, they may Experience that his Service is a Reward to it self, *in keeping his Commands there is a great Reward,* as appears from his Love-tokens dropt to them therein, by which their Hearts are Cheered and Refreshed, and made to *Flighter on Wings of Delight,* as when he throws up the Doors of the Chamber of Presence, and brings them to *sit down under his Shadow, and find his Fruit sweet to their Taste:* When he hears their Prayers, pardons their Sins, performs his Promises, takes them up to Mount Pisgah, and gives them a View of the Land of Glory, *Psal. 16. 11.* When the strengthening, quickning, comforting and confirming Gales of his Spirit attend them in their Service, *Song 1. 16.* And

Hebrews XII. Verse 28.

431

And when he seasonably appears for them, in their Straits and Extremities, when their Feet had almost slipped, his Mercy held them up, in the multitude of Thoughts within them, his Comforts delight their Souls. When their Burden is Overcharging, he lays it on his own Back, he Sympathizes with them, and allows them his Presence in the saddest of Troubles, *Isa. 63. 9. Chap. 43. 1, 2.* Is it not good Serving such a Master? 2. There is Eternal Gain. He has laid up for them that fear him, and keeps in store for them that love him, *that Eye has not seen nor Ear heard; nor can it enter into the Heart of Man to conceive.* To sit on a Throne with a Crown and Scepter, Cloathed with white Robes, singing Hallelujahs to endless Eternity, is in Reserve for our Lord's Servants, as the Result and undeserved Reward of their Service.

71: 31: 19:
without 301

Thirdly, I am to shew why we should take Care to Serve him Acceptably: Tho' what is already said may discover it to be Reasonable and Advantageous to serve so good a Master, yet I shall further recommend this great Duty by some additional Reasons; As 1. There is all Justice in the World why we should do it, considering his Sovereignty over us, and Propriety in us. We are his by Creation, *He has made us, and not we our selves,* he has Redeemed us at the dear Rate of his own Blood, of Slaves he has made us Sons; and therefore we should serve him with our Bodies and Spirits that are his. We are his by a Right of Conquest, he has Redeemed us from Sin, Satan, Hell and Death: We are his by a voluntary Surrender, having dedicate our selves to him by our own Consent, in a perpetual Covenant never to be forgotten; And we are his by Right of Preservation, he gives us our Daily Bread, and every Thing we stand in need of; And, shall we not then serve him? 2. There is Equity in it on our Part, *Matth. 7. 12. Whatsoever ye would that Men do to you, do ye even so to them.* You expect these whom you feed and maintain in your House, to whom you give Meat and Wages, should serve you; Yea, you are sometimes too rigid in exacting Service of them, and will not ye serve the Lord of Glory who brought you out of nothing, who hitherto supported you, yea, who made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant for you. 3. There is indispensable Necessity for it, for this End were we set on the Stage to serve him in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of our Life, *Luke 1. 74, 75.* To withdraw Service from him is the Height of Ungratitude and Rebellion; It is to choose Satan's Slavery with eternal Punishment in Flames of Fire, before Christ's Service with an eternal Reward of Glory. 4. Our Lord's Service is Sweet and Easie in it self, and far beyond that of the World. Saints serve but one Master, others serve diverse Lusts and Pleasures; Saints have their Work and Wages both laid before them, their Work is shaped out, and their Wages secured; not so with other Servants: Saints have Christ's Assistance to make their Work easie, they can do all things through Christ strengthening them, *Phil. 4. 13.* They have a Promise of Pardon to their Failings and Imperfections, the Law of Love constraining them to it, and a sweet Reward both here and hereafter, to encourage them in every Step of it, which others cannot pretend to. 5. This is all the Rent and Tribute we can pay to the Lord; Angels, yea, and all Creatures serve him in their Station: Shall Man whom he has Redeemed, and on whom he has bestowed greater Favours than on any other Creatures, only come short and ly behind? What a Life-rent Tack of Mercies do we enjoy? And, what shall we render to him for the same? 6. It is not in vain to serve him, he never commanded the House of Jacob to seek his Face in vain. They that Honour him, he will Honour, but they that Despise him shall be lightly Esteemed, *1 Sam. 2. 30.* His Servants shall be protected from all Evil, they shall have Maintenance, and be fed with the richest Delicacies which graceless Souls are Strangers to, *Isa. 65. 13, 14.*

There-

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my Servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: Behold, my Servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: Behold, my Servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold, my Servants shall sing for joy of Heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of Heart, and shall howl for vexation of Spirit. And Saints shall have the choice and purest of Comforts, sweeter than Honey from the Honey-comb.

Use 1. Of Information. That the great God has joyned Duties and Privileges together; do not ye separate what he has so inviolably conjoynd.

Use 2. Of Trial. If you serve the Lord acceptably, try by these Evidences, 1. Such are obedient to his Will, their Master's Commands are the Rule of their Life, they obey him freely and cheerfully, *Isa. 1. 19.* devoutly and fervently, *Rom. 12. 11.* universally endeavouring to keep his Precepts at all Times, Places and Occasions, *Psal. 119. 6.* Sincerely and with a perfect Heart, singly designing God's Glory, *1 Cor. 10. 31.* *Isa. 38. 2.* and constantly, even to the End, Being Faithful unto Death, and so we shall get a Crown of Life, *Revel. 2. 10, 26.* 2. They are diligent in their Master's Service, the loitering Servant is a Kind of Thief, tho' he steals not his Master's Goods, yet, the time that he should be employed about his Service is profusely thrown away upon Vanities. 3. They are Faithful in his Service, and this must express it self, in being true to our Trust, even when our Master's Back is turned, minding still we are under his All-seeing Eye, in designing his Advantage, esteeming his Good as our own, in standing up for his Honour, when we hear his Name spoken against, we must Vindicate him, and in preserving our Master's Person. Christ is Injured when his Saints, his Cause, or his Interests are threatned or assaulted, and then should his faithful Servants appear Zealous for his Glory. 4. Such as serve the Lord Acceptably, have accepted the Merits of Christ's Death, the Righteousness he has purchased for them, as the only Mean to obtain the Pardon of their Sins and the Acceptance of their Persons, and perform every Duty in Christ's Strength, *Phil. 4. 13.* His Love constrains them to essay it, and his Grace enables them to do it, tho' they be Conscious of their own Weakness in it, yet they willingly endeavour to perform every piece of Duty he calls them to.

Use 3. Of Exhortation. Give up your Selves to the Lord's Service: Here I shall speak to two Sorts, First, To these who have engaged to be his Servants: Secondly, To you who refuse to take on this Yoke.

As to the First, You who have engaged to be the Lord's Servants, there be a few Pieces of Work your Master puts in your Hand, and I entreat you to make Conscience of performing them, 1. Deny your selves and be reconciled to the Cross of Christ; this is the Service this Season and Day seems to call you to, else ye may be blown off your Feet by the approaching Storm. 2. Clear up your Interest in Christ, that be your Lot what it will in this World, ye may be secured of eternal Happiness, knowing in whom you have believed. 3. Be much in the Exercise of Mortification, be dead to the World, and get the predomining Power of Lusts broken, that these remove you not out of God's Way, and betray you into the Devil's Hands. 4. Be much in Prayer, thereby Trading and Corresponding with Heaven, and in order thereto study a holy tender Practice and Conversation, that the Channel of your Peace with God may be kept Clear and Unmudded, else your Correspondence will be marred: *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear me.* 5. Get a Soul-perswading Impression of Gospel-truths; this will have singular Influence on your Inward-frame and External-walk for this end, 6. Be often Meditation on these Truths, dwell there till ye extract and suck out the Marrow and Sweet of them, and feel a transforming Efficacy from them. 7. Be frequent

quent in Self-searching and Examination; this will keep Matters clear betwixt God and you, both as to your State and Case. 8. Cast back your Eye to the *Hebels* and *Ebenexers* you had, choice Trifles betwixt God and your Souls, the Place of your *Worship*, the *Foundation* and *Supporting the Pillar*, and this will be Confirming, Supporting & Encouraging. 9. Be frequent in Christian Conference and Communication, in order to the mutual Strengthening of one another. *Lastly*, Entertain deep and affecting Impressions of the best and great Things of practical Religion, Death, Judgment and Eternity; from these none can plead Exemption: Serious Thoughts on them will have good Influence upon your Life and Conversation. To move you to go on in this Service of the Lord, consider, That this will raise you up toward your original Perfection, every Man in a State of Nature without Grace, lives and dies like a *Beast*, *Psalm* 49. 12. *Jerem.* 10. 14. But this Service makes the Soul Noble, gives him Heaven's Breeding, *The Spirit of Glory and of God shines forth in him*. A Man is never really a Christian till he enter into this Service, it is not because he is Baptized, has a Profession, or goes to Ordinances, that he is approved of God; but because he is *Circumcised of the Heart in the Spirit*, (that is) heartily engaged in Christ's Service, *Rom.* 2. 29. Yea, this is the beginning of eternal Life, his Servants shall live with Saints and Angels in Heaven to all Eternity.

Secondly, I address my self to you who refuse to enter into our Lord's Service; I beseech you consider your Condition, 1. In Life you are Servants to Sin, and Slaves to your Lusts, which is the worst of Drudgery; for thereby your precious Souls are enthralled, which at first were fitted for our Lord's noble Service, the Fruits of this Slavery is only a little seeming Pleasure that lasts but for a Moment, *Eternal Death is the Wages due to it*, *Rom.* 6. 23. Yea, even in this Life you are the Devil's bond Men, his Servants and Slaves, and you have the Curse of God hanging over your Heads; you are *condemned in your Estate*, *Deut.* 28. 17, 18. in your *Name*, *Prov.* 10. 17. in your *House*, *Prov.* 3. 33. Yea, your Religious Duties, your *Prayers are an abomination to the Lord*, *Prov.* 15. 8. and you are liable to all sort of Judgments Temporal, as Pains, Sickness, Crocuses and Losses; Spiritual, as Blindness of Mind, Hardness of Heart, Vileness of Affections, and Horror of Conscience, and every Moment ready to sink down into burning Flames, to be for ever Miserable. Hence 2^{ly}, When Death comes, how will your Misery be increased? Then comes Conscience in with her Books of Accounts, a black and bitter Roll, shewing thee thy old Reckoning and Arrears: Then the Devil aggregates thy Sins to a Mountainous Height, and sets before thee the Wrath due for them, to drive thee to Despair: This will put an End to all thy Earthly Comforts, with all thy Pleasures and Delights, with all thy Wealth and Riches, thou can carry nothing hence; Death will salute thee with that Word, *Thou in thy Life-time received thy good Things, but now thou shalt be tormented, no more Offers of Grace, but to dwell with Devils and Damned, with devouring Fire, and everlasting Burnings, where the gnawing Worm of tormenting Conscience dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.* 3^{ly}, What will become of thee after Death at Judgment? The particular Judgment cited thee before a terrible Tribunal, but at the general Judgment the Souls & Bodies of Saints shall be united together: The Judge shall be set, the Parties cited, and he shall separate these that served him, from these who served him not: *The Book shall be opened, there and then all hidden Things will be brought to Light, and the fearful Doom pronounced, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his angels*, *Matth.* 25. 41. Consider these Things, and be afraid ye that will not now be prevailed with to enter into the Service of God, but prefer to be Drudges to the Devil and your own Lusts. But if on the other Hand

you

you will consent to be the Lord's Servants, to accept of him as your Lord and Master, and of his Law as the Rule of your Life. swearing to be Faithful to his Service, and Covenanting with him as he offers himself to be yours in the Gospel: Then you shall be enriched with all the Privileges he bestows on his Children, *Prov. 17. 2. A wise Servant shall have Part of the Inheritance among the Brethren.* You shall have the Lord's Favour, *Prov. 14. 35. The King's Favour is toward a wise Servant.* You shall have Grace here and Glory hereafter, *Where there shall be no more Curse: but the Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be there; and his Servants shall serve him. And they shall see his Face; and his Name shall be in their Foreheads. Revel. 22. 3, 4.* I proceed to

Observe, 3. That Grace is the Living Spring and Principle of all acceptable Service done to the great God, or it is indispensably Necessary thereto.

To render this Doctrine more Useful to you, I shall, First, Consider what is that Grace which is so indispensably Necessary. Secondly, That it is so Necessary.

As to the First, The Grace that is Necessary in order to serve the Lord Acceptably, is, First, The Reality, Truth, and Being of Grace, exerting it self in the Renovation of the Soul after the Image of God, *2 Cor. 5. 17. If any Man be in Christ he is a new Creature: old Things are past away, behold, all Things are become new.* Concerning this Renovation of the Soul, Notice, 1. That it is not a meer Change of the Judgment from Error to Truth; this Simon had, who was yet in the Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bond of Iniquity; Neither is it only of a Man's Practice, from Profaneness to Morality and Civility; this is common among Professors, where Lust is Thwarted, Dared and Over-awed with Fears of Hell, which Heathens may have, *Rom. 2. 15.* while they want Grace: Nor is it a Change from meer Adorality to Formality in Religious Duties; thus Hypocrites are changed by the common Gifts of the Spirit enlightning their Minds; Nor is it a Change of the Essence or Substance of a Man, he remains essentially the same still. But positively this Change consists in the Infusion of new Habits of Grace into the old Faculties, which immediately depose Sin from its Dominion over the Soul, and delivers over the Soul into the Hands and Government of Christ. This is the Change Grace makes, and of it, we assert, 2ly, It is a real Change, no Fancy or Delusion, but really Existent; For God hath represented this Work of Grace under such Names in Scripture, as if they had been chosen of Design to obviate this Calumnie as a new Creature, *2 Cor. 5. 17. Gal. 6. 15. The hidden Man of the Heart, 1 Pet. 3. 4. a new Birth, John 3. 3. and Christ formed in us, Gal. 4. 19.* This may silence the Atheistical Surmises of a profane World. This Change works wonderful Effects on a Man, turning him just opposite to what he was before, as Paul after Conversion preached the Faith which once he destroyed, *Gal. 1. 23.* There is a Divine Omnipotent Power goes forth to produce it, hence Faith is said to be the Operation of God, *Coloss. 2. 12.* Yea, it is the same Power that raised Christ from the Dead, *Ephes. 1. 19, 20.* Must it not be a Real which so many thousand Saints have suffered so many cruel Torments and Miseries, rather than desert or forsake it; Would they have done all this for a meer Conceit and Fancie? The Reality of it is also evident from its Uniformity in all these on whom it is wrought, they have all obtained the like precious Faith, *2 Pet. 1. 1.* They are all changed into the same Image, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* Three thousand affected after one and the same manner at one Sermon, *Acts 2. 37.* Could one and the same Conceit affect them all at once? The Experiences of Believers at thousands of Miles Distance examine them, and you will find them substantially agree as Face answers Face. Must it not be Real which makes so universal a Change on the whole Man, the Understanding is made to see an Evil in Sin, and a Beauty in Christ it saw not before; the Will cheerfully to comply with these Duties it was once opposite to; the Conscience

sanctified.

Hebrews XII. Verse 28.

439

smartly to challenge for these Sins that before were passed in Silence and buried in Oblivion; the Afflictions set on new and better Objects, Sin becomes the chief Object of Hatred: Christ and Communion with him is the great Thing the converted Man loves, desires, and seeks to enjoy, he fears his Displeasure more than all Torments, and rejoices in his Presence more than in all worldly Comforts, whereas before Conversion it was quite otherways. As these Things now evidence the Reality of the Change, so there will be a more unquestioned Demonstration of it at the great Day, when the converted Man shall be under the Smiles of Christ's Countenance, the unconverted under his Wrath and Curses; To the former he will say, *Come ye blessed of my Father, enter into the Kingdom prepared for you;* But to the latter, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. Take him Devils, bind him hand and foot, and cast him into utter darkness.*

Secondly, We stand in need of aiding and assisting Grace, strengthening and supporting Gales and Influences from the Spirit of God, without which we can do no acceptable Service to him, *Rom. 8. 26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our Infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us, with Groanings which cannot be uttered.* When you are indisposed for Duties, empty and dry, know not how to address the Throne of Grace, *The Lord sends the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father, Galat. 4. 6.* furnishing you with Words, and with a suitable Frame in Duty, diverting from Carnal Objects, and leading to imploy Christ our alone Mediator, and set Faith on the Promises. The Spirit helps Ministers to Preach, and People to Pray, to Praise, to Meditate, and to do every Duty acceptably. When Temptation presses you sore to Sin, an evil Heart within pleading to comply, while Satan is tempting from without, you will hear sometimes a Voice, *Saying, O do not this abominable thing that I hate, Jer. 44. 4.* The Lord by his Grace keeps Satan from assailing his People, or gives them Grace to Resist, directs them to make use of the Spiritual Armour and in end tread Satan under their Feet, *Rom. 16. 20. By his Grace he causes us walk in his Statutes, and keep his Judgments and do them, Ezek. 36. 27. Yea, gives us Strength not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake, Phil. 1. 29.* He allows inward Joys, Comforts, and Sealings of the Spirit, entertaining the Soul with hidden Manna, which makes you *run and not weary in Duty, and walk and not faint. 3ly, Continual Exercise and Growth in Grace is also necessary, to grow less in our own Eyes, to grow proportionably in every Grace, to have Faith feeding on Christ; Love, delighting in him; Hope, expecting Good at his Hand; Patience, waiting on him in a Day of Trouble; Fear of displeasing him; Joy in his Presence, and fervent Desires after the Enjoyment of him. To have Grace suited to its several Occasions, that when Corruptions are strong, Grace may be able to give Check to them; when Burdens are heavy, we may have Patience to bear; when Temptations are strong, Faith may be able to Resist; when Difficulties are many, Courage may support under them. Under Disappointments, Crosses and Losses, to have a quiet submissive Spirit, and under Prosperity to be Humble and Thankful. This Growth in Grace is an Evidence of the Truth and Reality of it, it is the Beauty of a Christian, it glorifies God the Giver, makes you taste of the Comforts of Religion, and be useful to others in your Day and Generation. The Lord advances this Growth in Grace by blessing Ordinances and Duties, and by the daily Influences of his Spirit, causing the north and south Wind come and blow upon your Garden, that the Spices may flow out, Song 4. 16. throwing down that heavenly Dew that will make the Believer grow as the Lily, and cast forth his Root as Lebanon: His Branches spread, and his Beauty be as the Olive tree,*

and his Smell as Lebanon, Hosea 14. 5, 6. 4th, We stand in need of restoring Grace Psal. 23. 3. *He restoreth my Soul*. Sometimes the People of God are far fallen away from God by Security, and by Discouragement, then the Lord restores them by discovering to them their Malady, pointing out the Remedy, encouraging them by Promises to make use of it, and threatening them if they be negligent; thus he did to the Church of Sardis, Revelat. Chap. 3. vers. 1. to 5. Sometimes when other Methods will not do, he will take up the Rod and whip them to their Duty, as he did to Jonah. But at other times he will Encourage and Comfort, by hearing their Prayers, helping them in Distress, granting them his Spirit to witness with their Spirits, that they are his Sons, giving them Joy in the holy Ghost, Peace of Conscience, and manifold Experiences of his Love, whereby he breathes new Vigour in their Souls, and builds them up in Holiness and Comfort, till they appear before him in Glory. 5th, We need Persevering Grace, the best of Men would soon fall from a State of Grace, if the Lord did not support and secure our Perseverance on immovable Foundation. Such as his eternal love, John 13. 1. *Whom he loves he loves to the end*. His omnipotent Power, *by which you are kept through Faith unto Salvation*, 1 Peter 1. 5. *None is able to pluck you out of his hand*, John 10. 28. The Merits of his Death and Intercession for you, which cannot be in vain, Rom. 8. 34. The unalterable Nature of the Covenant of Grace, of which he is Surety, Psal. 89: 30—34. and the Indwelling of the Spirit, which always abides with his own People, 1 John 2. 27. Therefore endeavour ye in the Strength of his Grace to continue to the End, and in order thereto, beware of wearying of God's Service, take a reflex View of your first Engagements to Christ, and frequently renew them: Endeavour Mortification of Sin, and to have your Hearts weaned from the World, to watch against the first Steps of Declining, to live by Faith on Christ, and to keep a Conscience void of offence toward God, and toward Men. I proceed.

In the 2^d. Place, to shew, That Grace is indispensibly necessary in Order to the serving of God acceptably; which is evident, 1. Because it is God's Design in bestowing Grace to fit his People for serving him. Could ye think the great God would employ his infinite glorious Power in this Master-piece of his Works of Wonder wrought on Men, and not aim at some singular Service thereby? Nay, it is his very Design, Isa. 43. 21. *This People have I formed for my self, they shall shew forth my Praise*. Eph. 2. 10. *We are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*. And accordingly he expects singular things of such Persons, Matth. 5. 47. *What do ye more than others?* This new Make of the Soul by Grace fits for Service, by its heavenly Inclination and natural Tendency to God, by Virtue whereof, if God call a Man to any Duty, there is a Principle within closing with the Command without, Psal. 27. 8. This is the writing of God's Law in the Heart, Jerem. 31. 33. And if God call a Man to suffer, he is enabled to break his Way through all Barresses and Discouragements; Graceless Men scare at them, but the gracious Soul says, *Though an Host should encamp against me, my Heart shall not fear: Though War should rise against me, in this will I be confident*. One thing have I desired of the Lord that will I seek after, *that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of my Life*, Psal. 27. 3, 4. *Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness*, — Nay in all these things we are more than Conquerors, *through him that loved us*, Rom. 8. 35, 37. 2^{ly}, Man without Grace is absolutely incapable to serve God acceptably, Rom. 8. 7. *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be*, John 14. 5. *without me ye can do nothing*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *The natural Man*

Adam receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Enlighten'd to him; neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned. John 6. 44. *No Man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.* The Scripture every where ascribes our Regeneration and Sanctification to the Spirit of God, John 1. 12, 13. 1 Peter 3. 23. John 3. 5, 6. James 1. 18. Titus 3. 5. And it is reasonable it should be so, that God may be acknowledged as the supreme Independent Cause of all his Works, not as Attendant of our Will, but as a Sovereign free Agent, that the Promises made to Christ of his having a numerous Off-spring, whom he should bring to Glory, may be Sure, depending on God's unalterable Counsel, accomplished by his Omnipotent Power, and that all People may intirely depend on the Lord for bestowing of Grace, and performing his Promised Mercies. 3ly, No Habit of Grace, nor any Habit as such, can reduce it self into Acting; Sun, Moon and Stars, move not themselves, but as they are moved by some other Powers; we are commanded to *stir up the Grace of God that is in us*, 2-Tim. 1. 6. The Habit must lie dead, except we improve it, the two Talents do not make themselves four, the Man to whom the Talents are given must do that: Hence the People of God, even after Conversion, cry for renewed Influences of the Spirit of God, Song 4. 16. Ch. 1. 4. Pl. 119. 24. They see the Motions of Sin and of the Body of Death too strong for them, without the Assistance of Grace, Rom. 7. 18—25. 4ly, Without assisting and strengthening Grace, you will be but weak Willows and bruised Reeds, not strong Cedars, fit for eminent Service in God's House, without a rich Measure of Grace, ye can never glorifie God, and be useful in your Generation, as the Cloud of Witnesses have done before you; ye can never commend the Grace of God to others by your Lips and by your Life, by your Walk and Conversation, or by your Sufferings when called thereto. Yea, 5ly, Without assisting, restoring, and persevering Grace, you will be ready to faint in a Day of Adversity, to succumb under Trials, to dishonour God, to offend the Generation of the Righteous, to lose your Comforts, to yield to Temptation, to lead a bad Life, and want the Sense of Comfort as Death. 6ly, Our Stock is not now in our Hand, but by the Tenor of the new Covenant it is treasured up in Christ, to be communicable to us, John 1. 16.

Is it so, *That Grace is so indispensibly necessary in Order to serve God acceptably?* Then hence we may infer, 1. That it is no wonder that graceless Persons Service is not accepted of God, their Prayers are but an Abomination to him, they proceed from a wicked Frame of Spirit, are not seasoned by Grace, nor perfumed with the Incense of Christ's Merits. 2ly, Hence also we see the Reason why many, even of God's People come no better Speed in Duties, it is because they trust too much to their Strength, and depend too little on the Grace of God for Assistance and Acceptance; this makes them lose the Comfort of many Performances, yea have them rejected of the Lord; this occasions their many sad Declinings from the right Way, and that they *soil all Night and catch nothing*. 3ly, Then it is reasonable for us in every Duty we perform, to depend on the Lord for his Grace for Assistance and Acceptance, and to seek it of him by Prayer; Prayer opens the Way to the Performance of all the Promises, Ezek. 36. 37. Psal. 4. 13. *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.* You must not give over Duty for want of Ability to do it acceptably, but endeavour to set about it in the Lord's Strength, and wait on him for Furniture to do it, so as to be approved. The Mariner must not loiter, but prepare and be in readiness for his Voyage, and in due time God commands the Wind to fill his Sails: The labouring Man must Plough the Ground, and cast in the Seed, and in due time the Increase will come. And when you have got Duty performed, do not impute it to your Strength or good Management, but ascribe it intirely to the Grace

Grace of God, and the Apostle when he says, *he loved us more dearly than himself*, 1 Cor. 13. 13. he immediately adds, *For we are the objects of his love*. Let God have all the Praise, to whom alone it is due. So I proceed to observe, 1. That such is the glorious Greatness, Dread and Majesty of God, that ought to influence our Hearts and Minds unto Reverence and godly Fear in all Acts and Parts of his Service. 2. That this Doctrine more useful, I shall, 1. Explain the Nature of this Frame; 2. Give Reasons why it is so necessary in the Service of God.

1. As to the first, This Frame has two Parts, the first is *Reverence*, which is an holy Shamefacedness and Blushing; as you heard in the Explication of the Text, arising from a deep and affecting Sense of Self-emptiness and Vileness, being well acquainted with our own Heart; and from a believing View of the Purity and Majesty of God as glorious in Holiness.

The second Part of this Frame is *Godly Fear*, which is not a misbelieving Fear, calling in Question God's Faithfulness, crying out, *Is his Mercy clean gone? Will he promise and then break?* Neither is it a cowardish Fear, laying, *There is a Lion in the way, I shall one Day fall by the hands of Saul*. Neither is it a natural Fear, these are all Impressions on the Souls of good and bad Men, Rom. 2. 15. Nor is it a Fear flowing from meet Apprehension of Punishment, as that of Cain, Abimelech and Judas. But positively, It is an Evangelical Fear, *Let the Lord be your Fear and your Dread*, and it has for its Object, 1. God himself, Deut. 28. 58. His People are afraid of his Judgments, of his Wrath and Indignation; Psal. 3. 16. Of his comely Majesty, lest they dishonour or displease him; Jer. 13. 14. and of his Goodness and pardoning Grace, lest they forfeit their Right thereto, Psal. 130. 4. 2. His Saints fear Sin more than Hell and all Punishment; it being that which dishonours God, debases our Souls, and is the Fountain of all Mischief, Prov. 16. 6. *By the fear of the Lord Men depart from Evil*. 3. They fear lest they lose their Souls, Heb. 4. 1. *Let us therefore fear, lest a Promise being left us of entering into his Rest, and of our souls seem to come short of it*. 4. They fear a Self-deceiving Heart, and there is great ground for it, this is our chief Enemy within our Walls.

This Fear casts out, 1. The Fear of Man and of his Power; a Saint when Grace is in Exercise, will not be hindered by the Threats of Men from the Discharge of present Duty, Jer. 1. 8. 2. It delivers from the Fear of God's breaking Covenant with his People and demanding them, after they have fled to him for Refuge, and accepted of him on his own Terms, Rom. 8. 15. *To have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to Fear*. 3. It delivers from the Fear of Suffering, when this Grace is in Exercise, Saints will not shun the Cross by betaking themselves to any unlawful Shift, nor faint under it, when in Providence they are called to it; but count it their Honour to suffer for so good a Master. 4. It delivers from a misbelieving slavish Fear of Death, your Master has conquered this Enemy, Heb. 2. 14, 15. has assured you of the Victory. Death shall deliver Saints from the Sins, Pains and Troubles of a present Life, and land them at the Possession of everlasting Glory.

Thus, godly Fear presupposes a serious Consideration of the due Debt of Sin, the Punishment it deserves as necessary for the Vindication of God's Glory, that his Word has told, *That they who do such things are worthy of Death*, and to insist it is agreeable to the Holiness of his Nature, as well as to the Sanctity of his Law. It also supposes a believing Impression of the Majesty, Terror and Greatness of God, that he is a consuming Fire, Ver. 29. A Conviction, that in Justice the Punishment threatened might fall on us.

And thus, I have endeavoured to explain the Nature of this Frame, and to give Reasons why it is so necessary in the Service of God.

Hebrews XIL Verse 28.

259

Discovery of the Sinfulness of Sin, to us to conceive an Abhorrence of it, and a constant Watchfulness against all carnal Confidence. Rom. 12. 20. *Thou shalt be thy Brother's Keeper.* This Fear has these Ingredients in it. 1st Understanding, they that do his Commandments. 2^{ly} It has Faith in it, this helps to see with God's Eyes, it looks on all things as God looks on them. God's Word affords Eyes to Faith. Heb. 11. 9. By Faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with Fear, prepared an Ark to the saving of his House. 3^{ly} There is Love in it, Love to God, Tenderness to his Glory and Concern for our own Souls moves to oppose Sin, which would dishonour God, and ruin our selves. 4^{ly} There is an Aversion from Sin as Sin, the three former are Causes of this Fear, this is the Nature of it. 5^{ly} There is Foresight in it, Fear is of future Evil apprehended to be coming on, Prov. 22. 3. *A prudent man foreseeth evil and hideth himself.* A Mariner foresees a Storm coming by the gathering of the Clouds, he furls his Sails, and puts his Ship in Trim to shun the bad Effects of it. So do the Saints, when by the Eye of Faith they see Danger approaching to the Generation. 6^{ly} It has Forecast in it, it puts us to our Shifts how to escape. Isa. 26. 20. *Come, my People, enter thou into thy Chambers, and shut thy Doors about thee: hide thy self as it were for a little Moment, until the Indignation be overpast.* Psal. 39. 1. *I said, I will take heed to my Way, that I sin not with my Tongue.* In time of War a wise Man will have his Enemy in his Eye, that befall not on him unawares.

In the second Place, I am to give Reasons why this Reverence and godly Fear is so necessary in the Service of God; and 1. We should fear because of our Ignorance; Who have such Cause of Fear as the Blind? Every Bush may be a Thief, every Step may be into a Ditch for ought he knows, to the contrair, then fear, because you know not the Way whither thou art going, John 17. 25. Thou art a Pilgrim, but to what City or Country? to the New Jerusalem, but knows thou the Way thither, the straight and narrow Way, knowest thou the Dangers of the Way into which you are ready to plunge every Hour? Then serve the Lord with Reverence and godly Fear, for he alone is able to guide you. 2^{ly} Fear, because of the Deceitfulness of your own Hearts. They are deceitful and desperately wicked, Jer. 17. 9. He that trusts in his own Heart is a Fool, Prov. 28. 26. It is his Design is to betray into the Hands of the Enemy: It is subtle and crafty, James 1. 22. *Pro. 12. 21. it puts on the Face of a Saint to mask the Soul of a Devil.* 3^{ly} Serve the Lord with Reverence and godly Fear, because of the Weight and Importance of the Service we are employed in; the great thing God puts in our Hand is, *Take heed to thy self, and keep thy Soul diligently.* Deut. 4. 9. *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.* Psal. 2. 11. *Work on your own Salvation with fear and trembling.* Phil. 2. 12. 4^{ly} Because of the great Treasure we carry about with us, a Believer carries more Riches with him than the whole World is worth, his Heart is the Ark where the two Tables of the Covenant are laid up, he has Christ in him, the hope of Glory, the Pawns of diving Love, The white Stone and the new Name, the Port of Adanna, the white Robe of Christ's Righteousness, and all this among Thieves and yet not fear. Some may object, Why need I fear, I have nothing to lose? Answer, Thou hast the more to get, wilt thou be thus Poor forever? Dare thou go down thus to the Grave? But as Poor as thou art, thou may be poorer, thou hast a Day of Grace to lose, the Door of Mercy is yet open, thou hast a Soul to lose more valuable than all the World, it is the cheapest Penny worth the Devil can buy, alas, many are such Fools as to sell them as cheap as Bess did his Birthright, a Soul

327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

for a Lust, for an Whore, for a drunken Rant, or the like: the lowest Price the Devil bids will hardly be refused. *5b*, *Serve the Lord with Reverence and godly Fear*, because of the Majesty, Glory and Greatness of the eternal Jehovah whom we adore; *Let him be our Fear and our Dread*, lest we provoke him to Wrath: to prevent which, let us fear those things that will make both our Persons and Services unacceptable to God; let us fear our predominant Idols, our disguised and masked Lusts, our Crosses and Tribulations; lest they separate us from Christ, through our Miscarriage under them; the World and the things of it, lest it steal away our hearts from his Service, and the fearful Consequences of having our Persons and Services eternally rejected of God, the Dung of all our Sacrifices cast back on our Faces.

HEBREWS XII. Verse 29.

For our GOD is a consuming Fire.

THIS is a cogent Reason to enforce the Performance of the Duty in the preceding Verse, to *serve the Lord Acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear*. It is taken from *Deuter. 4. 24* where it is used by *Moses* to deter People from Idols in the Worship of God.

The Words are a Metaphor, wherein God is compared to a *consuming Fire*, because of a Likeness in the Effects, as to the Case under Consideration, as a vehement Fire will consume whatever combustible Matter is cast into it, so will God with a fiery Terror consume such Sinners as are guilty of the Sin here discharged. And herein he is designed *our God*, even under Covenant-Relation to us, and yet it is his Will we should have holy reverend Apprehensions of his Greatness and Terror toward Sinners, *For our God is a consuming Fire*: Which Expression represents, 1. The Holiness and Purity of his Nature, with his Severity and vindictive Justice, and these, as also the rest of his essential Properties are proposed to us in the first Command, from them he will consume impenitent Sinners, who have no saving Interest in Christ, as Fire consumes combustible Matter cast in it. 2b, It represents his jealousy with respect to his Worship, as declared in the second Commandment, *Deuter. 4. 24. The Lord thy God is a consuming Fire, even a jealous God*. This Title God first gave himself with respect unto his instituted Worship, *Exod. 20. 5*. This Affection in Man is a vehement Inclination rising from a Fear or Apprehension, that any other should have an Interest to, or possess that which they think peculiar to themselves, as in a State of Marriage, and Courting in order to it: So that Covenant betwixt God and his Church has the Nature of a Marriage-covenant, *Jer. 3. 14. Isa. 54. 5*. In this State is Religious Worship, both as to the external Form of it in divine Institution, and its inward Form of Faith and Grace, which God requires as wholly and only his own, and because this Jealousie is a vehement burning Affection, God is therefore said to be a *consuming Fire*. From this Text

Observe, That when the great God takes poor Sinners near to himself in Covenant, so as to be their God, he strictly requires that they always retain due Impressions and Apprehensions of the Holiness of his Nature, the Severity of his Justice, and his ardent Jealousie concerning his Worship. This complex Doctrine resolves it self into these Branches.

First, That God is pleased to take some poor Sinners into a near Covenant-relation with himself, so as to be their God.

Secondly,

Secondly, That such under that Relation ought, above all others, to keep up due Apprehensions of his Holiness, severe Justice, and ardent Jealousie. I begin with

The first Observe! That God is pleased to take some poor Sinners into Covenant relation with himself, so as to be their God, Jerem. 30. 22. Chap. 31. 33. 2 Sam. 23. 5. Psal. 136. 2.

To prepare this Note for your Use, I shall, 1. Shew what it is to Covenant with the Lord. 2ly, That it is a great Privilege to be in Covenant with him.

As to the First, There be two Ways Man may be said to be in Covenant with God; 1. Externally, By visible Profession and Subjection to Ordinances, thus the Lord says to the Church of the Jews, Ezek. 16. 8. *I entered into a Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.* 2ly, Internally and Really, When a Man renounces Idols, dedicates himself to God and his Service, and accepts of God for his God and Portion, of the blessed Jesus for his Righteousness and Strength, and the holy Spirit to be his Sanctifier, Isa. 44. 5. Chap. 45. 24. This Covenant we virtually own in our daily Addresses to, and Dependence upon the Lord as our God.

The formal Acts of Covenanting are, 1. Renunciation of all your Idols, Hosea 14. 8. You abandon all Christ's Rivals, that he may have the alone Room in your Hearts: All your Sins, even these that were most near and dear to you, all the Pleasures, Honours, and Enjoyments of the World, in so far as they hinder you from enjoying of Christ, you quite and forsake, and disclaim all Confidence in your own Duties and Performances in your own Righteousness, relying only upon the Righteousness of your blessed Redeemer. 2ly, Dedication of your selves to the Lord, Rom. 12. 1. 2 Cor. 8. 5; 2 Chron. 30. 8. A Person Covenanting with the Lord, dedicates his Soul to him, his Understanding to be enlightned in the Knowledge of Christ, your Will to obey his Precepts, your Consciences, that they may challenge you for Sin, and your Affections, that they may be set in the right Channel, that ye may love God as the chief Good, hate Sin as the greatest Evil, rejoice in his Favour, fear his Frowns, hope for his Mercy, and believe in his Word. You dedicate your Body to him, as ready to part with Bodily Life when he calls, as willing every Member of your Body should serve him. Your Children to be his in Death or in Life; Your Riches to be at his Disposal for Relief of the Poor, for Good of the Church, and not merely for Pride and Luxury; Your Places and Stations, Gifts and Endowments, to be laid out for his Service and Honour; In a Word, That ye may be intirely *the Lord's, and not for another, from henceforth and for ever.* 3ly, Acceptation, that having heard of the great Mercies offered in the Gospel, you cordially bless God for them, and readily welcome them; you accept of the great God as your chief Good, the supreme Spring and Source of all your Happiness; you accept of the Son of God as your Teacher to Guide you by his Word and Spirit, till ye arrive at Glory; Of his Satisfaction and Merits, to be delivered thereby from the Wrath and Curse of God; ye accept of the holy Ghost as your Sanctifier; with your Hearts you believe divine Revelations, comply with divine Institutions and Ordinances, not to quite one Hoof of them; you acquiesce in divine Providences, Merciful or Afflicting, as being the Lord's Doing, and give Obedience to the divine Law, as Holy, just and Good. These be the principal Acts whereby the Soul Covenants with the Lord, and must be performed in a suitable Manner, That is, deliberately having weighed the Advantages and Difficulties in just Ballances, ye resolve on this Duty as absolutely Necessary, and expedient; presently, without Delay, you set about Performance, humbly from a Sense of Self unworthiness, willingly and cheerfully, as sensible it is not only your Duty, but your Honour and Privilege, to be admitted to it, in the Strength of Christ, depending on the Assistance of his Spirit and Grace to do it Acceptably and In-

Hebrews XII. Verse 29.

443

Secondly, That such under that Relation ought, above all others, to keep up due Affection for
of his Holiness, severe Justice, and ardent Fealousness. I begin with

The first Observe! That God is pleased to take some poor Sinners into Covenant-Relation with
himself, so as to be their God, Jerem. 30. 22. Chap. 31. 33. 2 Sam. 23. 5. Psal. 136. 2.

To prepare this Note for your Use, I shall, 1. Shew what it is to Covenant with
the Lord. 2y, That it is a great Privilege to be in Covenant with him.

As to the First, There be two Ways Man may be said to be in Covenant with God;

1. Externally, By visible Profession and Subjection to Ordinances, thus the Lord says to
the Church of the Jews; Ezek. 16. 8. *I entered into a Covenant with thee, and thou becamest*

mine. 2y, Internally and Really, When a Man renounces Idols, dedicates himself
to God and his Service, and accepts of God for his God and Portion, of the blessed Jesus

for his Righteousness and Strength, and the holy Spirit to be his Sanctifier, Isa. 44. 5. Chap.
45. 24. This Covenant we virtually own in our daily Addresses to, and Dependence
upon the Lord as our God.

The formal Acts of Covenanting are, 1. Renunciation of all your Idols, *Isa. 44.*

8. You abandon all Christ's Rivals, that he may have the alone Room in your Hearts:
All your Sins, even these that were most near and dear to you, all the Pleasures, Ho-

nours, and Enjoyments of the World, in so far as they hinder you from enjoying of
Christ, you quite and forsake, and disclaim all Confidence in your own Duties and

Performances in your own Righteousness, relying only upon the Righteousness of your
blessed Redeemer. 2y, Dedication of your selves to the Lord, *Rom. 12. 1. 2 Cor. 8. 5.*

2 *Cor. 30. 8.* A Person Covenanting with the Lord, dedicates his Soul to him, his
Understanding to be enlightened in the Knowledge of Christ, your Will to obey his

Precepts, your Consciences, that they may challenge you for Sin, and your Affections,
that they may be set in the right Channel, that ye may love God as the chief Good, hate

Sin as the greatest Evil, rejoice in his Favour, fear his Frowns, hope for his Mercy, and
believe in his Word. You dedicate your Body to him, as ready to part with Bodily

Life when he calls, as willing every Member of your Body should serve him. Your
Children to be his in Death or in Life; Your Riches to be at his Disposal for Relief of

the Poor, for Good of the Church, and not merely for Pride and Luxury; Your Places
and Stations, Gifts and Endowments, to be laid out for his Service and Honour; In a

Word, That ye may be intirely *the Lord's, and not for another, from henceforth and for ever.*

3y, Acceptation, that having heard of the great Mercies offered in the Gospel, you
cordially bless God for them, and readily welcome them; you accept of the great God

as your chief Good, the supreme Spring and Source of all your Happiness; you accept
of the Son of God as your Teacher to Guide you by his Word and Spirit, till ye arrive

at Glory; Of his Satisfaction and Merits, to be delivered thereby from the Wrath and
Curse of God; ye accept of the holy Ghost as your Sanctifier; with your Hearts you

believe divine Revelations, comply with divine Institutions and Ordinances, not to
quite one Foot of them; you acquiesce in divine Providences, Merciful or Afflicting,

as being the Lord's Doing, and give Obedience to the divine Law, as Holy, Just and
Good. These be the principal Acts whereby the Soul Covenants with the Lord, and

must be performed in a suitable Manner, *That is,* deliberately having weighed the Ad-
vantages and Difficulties in just Ballances, ye resolve on this Duty as absolutely Neces-

sary, and Impellent; presently, without Delay, you set about Performance, humbly
from a Sense of Self-unworthiness, willingly and cheerfully, as sensible it is not only

your Duty, but your Honour and Privilege, to be admitted to it, in the Strength of
Christ, depending on the Assistance of his Spirit and Grace to do it Acceptably and In-

revokably, without any Clause of Reversion or Reservation, never to draw back what ye have now offered to him, never to return to your Idols, and never to weary of Dependence on the Lord, and of the Service you have vowed to him. I proceed

In the *second Place*, to shew, That it is a great Privilege to be in Covenant with the Lord. Now, that it is so, is evident, 1. From the high Esteem Believers have of this Covenant-relation to the Lord, in their greatest Difficulties and Straits, even at Death it self, they value it as their Choice and only Cordial, *2 Sam. 23. 5. David's Crown*, yea, all the Crowns and Diadems of the World cannot yield a Believer such solid Comfort as this, *God has made with me an everlasting Covenant.* 2ly, The Spirit of God reckons these who are Strangers to this Covenant-relation, to be in the deepest Misery, *Ephes. 2. 12. Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World.* 3ly, The Covenant is the Channel and Conveyance of all Gospel-Mercies, *Isa. 55. 3. I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure Mercies of David, Luke 1. 71. To perform the Mercy promised to our Fathers, and to remember his holy Covenant.* It is Difficult, yea, almost Impossible to Recount how many Mercies are in it. That God has elected you from Eternity, effectually called you from among the rest of the World, converted you by his Grace, confirmed and strengthened you by his holy Spirit, justified you by the Imputation of our Redeemer's Righteousness, adopted you into the number of his Children, granted you the Consolation of the holy Ghost, made you to die to Sin and live to Righteousness, supported you under Temptations, and given you Grace to persevere to the End; all are rich, free Covenant Mercies. For the Spring and Source of them is free Grace, this laid the first Foundation-Stone, *Ephes. 1. 5.* The Design and End of them is to manifest the Glory of free Grace, *Ephes. 1. 6.* They are purchased in Mercy to us by a Mediator; they are graciously applied by Word and Ordinances, and by the inward Work of the Spirit of Grace. And they are all secured by Christ by his Promise, which is *Tea and Amen*, by his Oath, *Heb. 6. 18.* by his Seal, which is an inviolable Security, by the Death of the Testator, whereby the Testament is confirmed and made unalterable, and by his powerful Intercession interposed for Believers, whereby he pleads their Cause as his own, and certainly obtains whatever he asks for them. 4ly, Who can conceive it but to be a great Privilege for Mortals to have God to be their God, his Attributes interposed for their Safety, his Providences working for their Good, and his Promises as a Store-house to supply their Wants, his Statutes to be their Counsellors, his Angels to be their Guardian; To have the Son of God the blessed Mediator of the Covenant as their Prophet to instruct them, as their Priest to save them from Ruin by his Death, as their King to Rule in them and over them, as their Husband to love them, as their Physician to cure their Maladies, as their Surety to undertake for them: To have his Spirit to Convince, Convert, Assist, Strengthen and Comfort them, and to have Heaven secured for them in End as their everlasting Reward, even when they deserved everlasting Misery. Now, all these belong to Believers by the Tenor of the Covenant of Grace; therefore to be sure this is a matchless Privilege.

Use 1. Of Trial, If God be your God, if ye have a Covenant-right to him, examine by these Evidences, 1. Such who are in Covenant with the Lord, have the Earnest of the Spirit in their Hearts, *1 John 3. 24. 2 Cor. 1. 22.* He gives Corn, Wine and Oil, and such common Mercies to Bastards, but his Spirit only to his Heirs; This Spirit convinces of Sin and Misery, and of our need of Christ; It stamps the Impress of Holiness upon our Hearts; It allures us to himself, so as no other Object can enchant or draw us intently from him: And it elevates the Soul above the World, tho' ye live here, yet your

Heart

Heart is above: 2ly, These who are in Covenant with God, are daily making use of their Covenant-relation; When in the Dark they depend not on their own Understanding, but make use of Christ for Light and Direction, resolving to walk in the Light he affords; When Conscience accuses and Sin stares them in the Face, they look to the Merit of Christ's Blood for Pardon; When Sin is like to overcome, when Temptations and Lusts are very strong, they lean not only on their own Resolutions, Vows and Endeavours against them, but depend upon Christ who has obtained the Victory over Spiritual Foes, and promised the same to us; When the Cross is too heavy for them to bear, they look to their covenanted Lord for Strength to support under it; And, when Duties are difficult and above their Strength, they do not quit and give them over, but set about the Performance of them in the Strength of the Lord, *Psal. 71. 16. Phil. 4. 13.* 3ly, These who are in Covenant with the Lord, nothing but the Presence of Christ can satisfy them in Ordinances and Duties, they still pant after Conformity to him, and Enjoyment of him, *Psal. 17. 15. Psal. 63. 1, 2.* This is their Cordial in Afflictions, and their Support under the Cross. 4ly, Such know how they came by this Covenant-relation, what Sorrows, what Pangs and Throws ere they had the Comfort of it. They have found their natural Estate to be a dreadful Bondage and Slavery, the Service of Sin the Bonds of a Body of Death, the Power of Satan and the Fears of avenging Wrath to be very terrible: This makes them *pass their Sojourn here in Fear*, to be afraid lest they again fall in Bondage: This makes them loath Sin more than ever; Yea, *the very Garments spotted with the Flesh*, to cry out, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* 5ly, Such have a great Esteem and Love to their Covenanted Lord, Oft saying with *Moses, The Lord is my Strength and my Song, and he is become my Salvation, he is my God and I will prepare him an Habitation, my Father's God and I will Exalt him, Exod. 15. 2.* They love his People because his Image is stamped on them; They love Duties and Ordinances, because there they have Communion with him; They love his Commands, and cheerfully obey them, and they are concerned for his Glory, his Cause and Interest.

Use 2. Of Consolation, If God be our God, then Trials and Troubles may Strike us but not Sting us; If ye lose your Names, they are *written in the Book of Life*; If your Liberty, your Conscience is free; If your outward Estate, yet you have the Pearl of Price; And if you meet with Storms, you know where to put in for an Harbour, in *the strong Holds among the Prisoners of Hope*; You have got your Souls for a Prey, that Celestial Part better than the whole World, is safe, it cannot be lost. Yea further, if you have a Covenant-relation to God, then all that is in him is yours, *You are Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ, Rom. 8. 17.* He will intirely love you, Propriety is the Ground of Love, he may give Kingdoms and Crowns to Men, and not love them; But he cannot be their God and not love them, *Zeph. 3. 17. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee, is mighty to save, he will rejoice over thee with Joy, he will rest in his Love, he will joy over thee with Singing.* He will also do more for you than for all the World besides, he will bear with many Infirmities in you, *Isa. 57. 17, 18. Numb. 23. 21. Tho' all Comforts, all Friends and Relations leave you, the Lord will never leave you, Heb. 13. 5. He is our God for ever and ever, and will be our Guide even unto Death, Psal. 48. 14.* And after Death he will bring you to an *Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, 1 Peter 1. 4.*

Use 3. Of Exhortation, Does God admit poor Sinners into a Covenant-relation with himself? Then bless God for this Privilege, and cheerfully accept of it, renouncing your Idols, dedicating your selves to God and his Service, and embracing him as your God and Portion, our blessed Redeemer as your only Lord and Saviour, your *Righteousness*

and Strength; and the holy Spirit to Sanctifie and Guide you, till you arrive at Glory. You cannot give a solid Reason for one Moments Delay of so weighty a Concern, your Delays provoke God, grieve his Spirit, harden your Hearts, render your Repentance more difficult, please Satan, and put you in Danger of losing eternal Salvation. Therefore delay no longer, but presently welcome Christs Call, while the Door of Mercy is open, and our Lord inviting you to enter in, and accept of an Indemnity for all your former Trespases, and a Right to himself and all Blessings.

John 1:102 Use 4. Of Direction. To you who are in Covenant with God, 1. If God be thy God, then learn to be content with the Loss of other Things, Contentment is the Cure of Care, 2 Cor. 6. 10. It makes you, *As Sorrowful yet always Rejoycing, as Poor yet making many Rich, as having Nothing yet possessing all Things.* How well instructed was the Apostle, *Philip. 4. 11, 12. — I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be Abased, and I know how to Abound: Every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be Full and to be Hungry, both to Abound and to suffer Need.* The Lord is an All-sufficient, a Soul-satisfying, Enriching, and durable Good, the Choicest of all good Things: What can they want who have him? 2ly, Let this Cheer and Revive you in all Conditions, this was the Cordial he left with his Disciples when about to ascend, *John 20. 17. — Ascend unto my Father and your Father, and unto my God and your God.* Who should Rejoyce, if they do not who have the eternal God for their Portion, *Psal. 42. 11. Why art thou cast down O my Soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet Praise him, who is the Health of my Countenance and my God.* 3ly, Break out in Praise and Wonder at this invaluable Mercy with David, *Psal. 138. 28. Thou art my God, I will Praise thee; thou art my God, I will Exalt thee.* 4ly, Live as these who have God to be theirs, let others see him in you; Say, *What have I any more to do with Idols?* As well bid me drink Poison as commit Sin; Shall I forfeit my Interest in my God? Carry about with you the Impressions of this, *That our God is a consuming Fire,* which leads me to

Obi. 2. That as it is the Duty, so God expects that such who are under a Covenant-Relation to himself, will above all others, endeavour to keep up due Apprehensions of his Holiness, strict Justice, and ardent Jealousie.

To illustrate this Point, I shall, 1. Shew what is the Nature of this ardent Jealousie here compared to a consuming Fire. 2. When may Believers be said to have suitable Impressions of this. 3. Why these in Covenant with God ought to have such Impressions.

As to the First, It is difficult to explain the Nature of God's severe Justice, Anger and ardent Jealousie, it is more terrible than Words can express; yet I shall offer a few Considerations concerning it, as 1. That Wrath or Jealousie in God is not attended with any such Perturbation of the Passions, as in Men, which cannot be in the infinitely perfect divine Nature; but his Anger only signifies his not expressing his Favour, his shewing his Displeasure, his Decree to Punish, and the Execution of the same, if Repentance and fervent Prayer in the guilty Person do not prevent it. 2ly, That God's Wrath is very terrible, we may know, 1. By Scripture Expressions, *Nabum 1. 2. — 7. God is Jealous, and the Lord revenger, and is furious, the Lord will take Vengeance on his Adversaries; and he reserveth Wrath for his Enemies. The Lord is slow to Anger, and great in Power, and will not at all acquit the Wicked. — The Mountains quake at him, and the Hills melt, and the Earth is burnt up at his Presence, yea the World, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his Indignation? and who can abide the fierceness of his Anger? His Fury is poured out like Fire, and the Rocks are thrown down by him. Heb. 10. 30, 31. For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his People: It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God.*

Deut.

Deut. 32. 22. For a Fire is kindled in my Anger, and shall burn unto the lowest Hell, and shall consume the Earth with her Increase, and set on Fire the Foundations of the Mountains. Y. 41, 42. If I whet my glittering Sword, and mine Hand take hold on Judgment; I will render Vengeance to mine Enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine Arrows drunk with Blood (and my Sword shall devour Flesh.) 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8, 9. — When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. In the Text, and in several other Places, this Wrath of God is compared to a consuming Fire, because as Fire is terrible, so is this Wrath; as none can stand before consuming Fire, far less before an angry God; Fire consumes Houses, Ships, Persons, nothing can stand before it; but it is infinitely more dreadful to fall into the Hands of an angry God: Fire may be quenched by Water, so may God's Anger be appeased by the Tears of godly Repentance. 2y, That God's Wrath is terrible, may be known by its Effects; the Sin of Adam pursued with such inconceivable Judgments upon him, his Name and Posterity; the Apostate Angels turned into the miserable Estate of Devils, without the least hope of their Recovery; the drowning of the old World at once; the burning of Sodom, the opening of the Earth to swallow up the Rebellious, the Sea swallowing up Pharaoh and his Army; the forlorn Estate of the Gentiles, all without the Church, not look'd after for many hundreds of Years; the Jews, sometime God's only Church on Earth now made a Curse, Astonishment and Hissing all the World over; the Torments which Christ himself endured when he was but Surety for Sinners; the Wars, Famines, Pestilences, Diseases, Seditions, Heresies, the infinite Molestations of this Life, the Testimony of afflicted Consciences, when but a Drop of Anger lights upon the Soul of Man in this World, how unable is he to sustain his Spirit? What Floods of Tears flow from his wounded Heart? And Finally, The burning of the World, and the Flames of Hell, these are all Effects of God's severe Justice and Indignation, which evidently proclaim, that it deserves the Name of a consuming Fire, or of something more terrible, which is further evident, if you consider, 3y, What is against a Person when God is wroth to the utmost, when his Fury is poured out like Fire; Then the Divine Attributes are set against that Person, infinite Wisdom to contrive Punishment, omnipotent Power to see it execute, outworn Patience is turned into Fury, Faithfulness is obliged to execute the Threatnings, and spotless Justice being infinitely offended, sets all the rest a going; Then God's Acts of Providence, whether of Prosperity or Adversity, tend to bring on Ruin, then the Word is armed with Vengeance; Then God can order his Creatures to fight against his Foes, as the Sea was made to fight against Pharaoh, an Angel against Sennacherib and his Army, the Frogs and the Lice against the Egyptians; He can make one Man against another, and when we say, God Almighty is against his Foes, this is more than all things beside. Thus the Indignation of the Lord appears dreadful like a consuming Fire, and is plainly expressed to be so, by the Scriptures both of Old and New Testaments. The Wicked are made to drink out the unmixed Cup of God's Wrath, Believers taste but some Drops of his Fatherly Displeasure, which yet makes them keep up due Apprehensions of his severe Justice and ardent Jealousy. Which leads me

In the second Place to enquire, When may Believers be said to have suitable Impressions of this God whose severe Justice and ardent Jealousy is like a consuming Fire? Answer, 1. When they have an high Apprehension and Esteem of God, set him highest in their Thoughts, as the most Super-excellent and infinite God, adore him as a Constellation of all Beauties and Delights. 2y, When they are afraid to Sin against his spotless Majesty,

to incur his heavy Displeasure, cannot think to undergo the Frowns of his Anger, and to lose his Favour that is better than Life; Therefore, when tempted to Sin, they have still Joseph's Answer in their Mouth, *How can I do this great Wickedness, and sin against God?* 3ly, They are afraid of his righteous Judgments, *Psa. 119. 120. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.* Believers, you may be sensible, that your own Sins, and the Sins of the Land, do deserve Wrath, it is therefore your Duty to be afraid of it, and to take all proper Methods to prevent it, by wrestling with the Lord for Forgiveness and Mercy, by upstirring your selves and others to serious Repentance and Amendment of Life, and by looking to the Merits and Intercession of Christ for Reconciliation and Favour. 4ly, When we think and speak of him with the most profound Reverence and Adoration, *Neb. 9. 5. Blessed be thy glorious Name, which is Exalted above all Blessing and Praise.* When our Souls go out in expanded Reaches of Love and Delight in him, *Psal. 3. 11. Let them also that love thy Name be joyful in thee.* 5ly, When we give him holy and spiritual Worship, *Lev. 10. 3. I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the People I will be glorified.* If you give not Glory to God by performing acceptable Service to him, his Justice will be glorified in exacting Punishment of you; Therefore, *Give unto the Lord the Glory due unto his Name, Psal. 96. 8.* 6ly, When we are Hand and Foot for the Service of God in our Stations, *Psal. 40. 8. I delight to do thy Will, O my God: yea, thy Law is within my Heart.* Think it your Honour to do him Service, tho' he be a consuming Fire to the Workers of Iniquity, yet he is pleased to accept, and graciously to reward the weak Endeavours of his Servants: Believers, ye need not be frightened from your Duty by the Temptations of Satan, or the Threats of your Foes; your Redeemer has pacified the Wrath of God, has overcome your Enemies, and will at length consume them. 7ly, When we embrace the Righteousness and Merits of the blessed Jesus, who has made Peace by the Blood of his Cross, and consecrate a new and living Way to the Holiest of all, through the Vail of his Flesh. The flaming fiery Sword of Justice that guarded Sinners from entering to the Tree of Life, is by him removed, God's Justice is satisfied, and all his Attributes, his whole Word and Providences speak Comfort to these who have fled to him for Refuge; In him a Throne of Grace is erected, to which you may come boldly to obtain Mercy and find Grace to help in time of need. It is suitable indeed you should Pity and Pray for poor Strangers to Christ, against whom the Day of the Lord cometh that shall burn as an Oven, and all the Proud and they that do Wickedly shall be Stubble, and the Day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, *Mal. 4. 1.* But as for you that fear his Name and have fled to him for Refuge, ye may have strong Consolation, *Heb. 6. 18. The Sun of Righteousness shall arise on you with Healing under his Wings, Mal. 4. 2.* God's Justice is satisfied, and his Wrath against you is appeased.

In the 3d. Place, I am to shew, why these in Covenant with God ought especially to have reverend awful Impressions of this their God, who is a consuming Fire; And 1. You are more obliged to God than others; he has bestowed his redeeming and distinguishing Love on you, he has past by others and chosen you for himself, he has contrived an everlasting Covenant for you, and determined your Souls by his Grace to accept of the Terms thereof, and has admitted you to familiar Communion with himself: And should not ye then keep up suitable Impressions of his ardent Jealousie? 2ly, The Lord expects it of you, *Isa. 8. 13. Sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your Fear, and let him be your Dread.* To this end he has put his Spirit within you, and wrote his Fear in your Hearts, which others are Strangers to. 3ly, These Impressions are a noble Antidote against Sin and every Temptation to it, they overaw the Heart; *Neb. 5. 15. So did not I because of the Fear of God; They make you Realise God's Presence with, and his watchful*

ful Eye over you, and that you must render an account of all things done in the Body, whether they be good or bad. The Fear of Man nor any external Consideration, is not of such Influence to determine the Heart to Duty, in Publick and in Private, in good and bad Company, at all Times and Occasions; The Apprehensions of the divine Majesty, and ardent Jealousie only effectually do this. 4ly, This is the Way to maintain Correspondence and Trade with Heaven; the nearer Saints are admitted into the Presence of the Lord, the deeper will these Impressions fix on their Souls, so it was with Jacob, David, Job, Abraham, Daniel, and others. To conclude, hence take a few

Inference 1. Is our God a consuming Fire? Then let a wicked and impenitent Generation tremble, who are Strangers to a Covenant-right to this Lord, who live in the Lusts of the Flesh, unacquainted with and careless of Prayer, and keeping up Communion with God in Ordinances and Duties. Be perswaded you are under the Curse and Wrath of God, and in Danger to be consumed in the Fire of Hell; But your only Remedy is to renounce your Lusts, to devote your selves to the Service of God, and to embrace our Lord Jesus his Merits and Righteousness; he has satisfied Justice, pacified Wrath, and procured every Blessing to all these who embrace him.

Inference 2. Is our God a consuming Fire? Then, what exact Care ought you his Saints to take in all your Approaches to him, in the Acts of his Worship? That you serve him Acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear, that in Prayer you be not Lazie, or have wandering Hearts, that ye trust not in your Duties, or expect Reward on their Account; But only on the Account of the Merits and Intercession of our slain Saviour, whom by Faith ye have embraced: That you constantly and singly design God's Glory, and not the Applause of Men; and that at all Times and Occasions you carry as in the Sight of an All-seeing and Heart-searching God, whose Eyes are like a flame of Fire.

Inference 3. Is our God a consuming Fire? Then let us be making more quick Advances to greater Measures of Grace, to confirm our selves in the Faith of our Interest, to render us Acceptable to God, capable to be Useful in our Generation, to prevent the Outpouring of God's Wrath on our selves and others, to wrestle with the Lord for undeserved Blessings, to support under Temptations and Trials, that we may not decline from the Ways of God, nor lose Comfort in his Service, but may be to the Praise of his Grace who has called us out of Darkness into his marvellous Light. To this End, grow downward in Humility, and inward in Knowledge of your selves, above all, maintain a constant Abhorrency and Jealousie of the Sin of Pride; Let your own Hearts and Ways be the Matter of your daily Study; when Hypocrites have their Work abroad, let yours be at home, preserving Tenderness of Conscience and Fear of Sin; Depend much on Christ for Strength and Furniture for every Duty, make careful Choece of your Company, Saints may Edifie one another by their Converse; Guard your Tongues against idle Talk, improve Time to the best Advantage, that a Moment be not lost; Guard against a formal heartless way of doing Duties, be ay serious and awake about God's Service, when you cannot attain to that Heat of internal Affection you desire, be sure ye walk Uprightly before God, Sin not wilfully for a World. In a special Manner keep all your bodily Senses and Desires in Subjection, mortifie the Flesh, keep at under your carnal Appetites; Let not your Senses take the Reins out of your Hands, be oft renewing Covenant with God; And all your Life long, let your Work be to learn to Die. Faithfully practise these Things, and you shall stand when others fall, you shall grow in Grace when others decline from it; You shall die in Peace when others die in Horror, and you shall dwell in the Kingdom of Glory when others dwell with everlasting Burnings, and devouring Fire.

Inference

Inference 4. Is our God a consuming Fire? Then let the believing Persuasion of this influence your Behaviour in your respective Stations, whether Personal or Vocational, wherein this God has placed you. And the more Publick and Eminent your Stations be, these awful Impressions of our God as a consuming Fire, ought to be more deeply riveted on your Souls. And now, *Right Honourable*, you the Magistrates

This Sermon was Preached the 28th of September 1703, and seems to have been before the Election of the Magistrates of Edinburgh.

of this City, since God in his Providence has sent you in any way this Day, suffer this Word of Exhortation, hear and believe that our God is a consuming Fire. I cannot in the first Place but bless God on your Behalf, by whose good Hand on you, you have acquit your selves to the Approbation of the Consciences of all in the Lord, which I hope shall entail a Blessing on your Selves, Families and Posterity; So now in your last Step, namely, in the Choice of your Successors, mind what a God you have to do with, God who is a consuming Fire, he expects, you as his Substitutes, will act Faithfully for him, in providing able Men, *Such as fear God, Men of Truth, having Covetousness*, to Rule for God over this People. This is a Piece of Work of greatest Importance, because the Glory of this our God is highly concerned in it, every wrong Step in it will reflect on his Honour, *By whom Kings Reign, and Princes decree Judgment.* Your selves are concerned, your Credit and Reputation before Men is endangered by your Miscarriage in such Trusts, your inward Peace before God, which is yet more valuable is concerned; But alas! Oaths and Vows to design the publick Good being broken, Conscience is Sinned out of Doors: It is also of great Concern to others, for by the unjust Administrations of these in publick Offices, many are in hazard to be Ruined; Therefore I obtest you in the Lord to be on your Guard; The Eyes of many are on you at this present Juncture, some are waiting for your Halting, lying at the Catch to find Fault with you, that they may Trumper out to the VWorld your Imperfections and Miscarriages; You are now so Conspicuously Posted, that it is impossible for your Vices to be concealed. Others under Hand are essaying to shuffle in Men that may be Un-friends and Enemies to the present established Government in Church and State, which we pray God you may guard against. We have Reason to bless the Lord there be many zealous able resolute Men, stedfast Friends to the late happy *Revolution Footing*, so that you need neither be Straitned your selves, nor Straiten your Leets: Let there be no such Ground of Complaint among the Neighbourhood, let them have to Choole upon, and this will Crowne your publick Service with universal Approbation. And we pray the Lord give you Direction in these Matters.

Inference 5. Is our God a consuming Fire? Then beware of Apostacy and Backsliding from him in a Day of Trial and Tribulation; But prepare for Trials, face them resolutely, endure them Patiently, and beware of Apostacy under them: This you have heard to be the great Scope of this whole Chapter, I have now preached on to you these four Years, and these last VWords contain a Crowning Motive to persuade to Constancy and Perseverance, *For our God is a consuming Fire.*

F I N I S.
